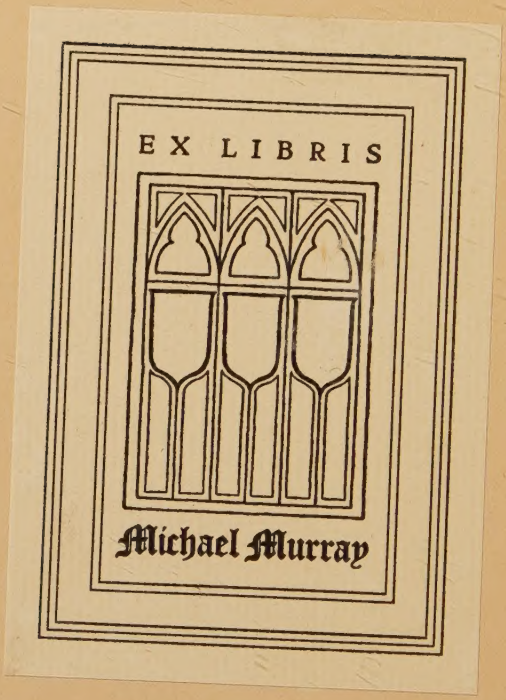
The Priest of To-Day
His Ideals and His Duties

O'Donnell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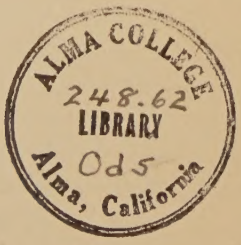
BY

THE REV. THOMAS O'DONNELL, C.M.

PRESIDENT OF ALL HALLOWS COLLEGE, DUBLIN



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PREFACE

THE principles that should govern the clerical life are given in Sacred Scripture, in the decrees of Councils, and in the writings of eminent ecclesiastics. In substance, they are the same in every century; only in their application do they differ. A priest is always and everywhere the ambassador of Christ, but he is also the child of his age and the citizen of his native or his adopted country. Hence the priest of to-day, while seeking God's Kingdom in the first place, should in all things lawful accommodate himself to the temper of the modern world, and should act in sympathy with the people whom he desires to serve. The present book is an attempt to trace in broad outline a rule of life for the young missionaries of All Hallows, to place before them the ideals and duties that should claim their allegiance. It makes no pretence to originality, but appeals for all its teaching to recognized authorities, especially to those of our own time and of English-speaking countries. In concluding this prefatory note, the writer desires to express his indebtedness to two friends—Dr. O'Mahony and Father Michael Flynn, C.M.—for many practical hints, and for their kindness in revising the proof-sheets.

THOMAS O'DONNELL, C.M.

ALL HALLOWS COLLEGE,
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THE PRIEST OF TO-DAY

CHAPTER I

Scis illos esse dignos ?

THE above question is familiar to all priests. It is associated with a leading event in their lives. It occurs in the ordination service. Just before the solemn imposition of hands the ordaining Prelate turns to the Archdeacon and asks: *Scis illos esse dignos ?* "Do you know are these young men worthy to be raised to the rank of the priesthood ?" Such a question is a momentous one—on its decision hangs the fate of multitudes of Christians. For it is impossible for a priest to be good or bad alone—*Sacerdos bonus malusve uni sibi esse nequit*[1]—his character and life exercise a far-reaching influence on the people. Good priests save themselves and they save others; they are a comfort to their Bishop, a comfort to their flock; they are, in fact, the strength and glory of the Church. *Sacerdos bonus, quale donum et quantum est!* On the other hand, even one unworthy cleric may do great harm. He may demean himself, he may disedify the people, he may lead not a few to eternal ruin. It is evident, therefore, that the Bishop's question to the Archdeacon involves most

"Do you know are they worthy ?"

[1] Pius X, *Exhortatio ad clerum*, August 4, 1908.

serious issues. Moreover, it is a difficult question to answer. For only God can know for certain who are called to the priesthood, only God can see the heart and decide infallibly on the fitness of Ordinands. Hence the answer usually given by the Archdeacon is a very qualified one—one that keeps in view man's frailty and liability to err. *Quantum humana fragilitas nosse sinit,* such are the very words. "I can testify only as far as I know, and I know only as far as human frailty allows."

The question of fitness must not, however, be restricted to the day of ordination. It is applicable to every day of a priest's life. It is always urgent, always clamouring for attention. It is the paramount solicitude of the Church of God. If the moral training of the clergy is allowed to deteriorate, if their personal sanctification is subordinated to any other consideration whatsoever, the flock will soon be without shepherds, God's city without watchmen, and the divine vineyard without husbandmen. Hence we can understand the general anxiety for the welfare of the clergy—*permulti ex omni ordine fidelium . . de communi cleri et ecclesiae bono vehementer solliciti.*[1] Hence Councils, Popes, Bishops, clerics, and loyal members of the laity are ever praying for good priests, ever begging the Lord to send labourers into the limitless fields that are whitening for the harvest. Councils pass decrees, Popes write encyclicals, Bishops address exhortations, clerics make retreats, and "generous souls not a few offer themselves as votive victims to God"[2]—all with the one aim and

[1] Pius X, *Exhortatio ad clerum.* [2] Ibid.

in the one hope, that the ministers of the Gospel may become more and more worthy to represent God and to dispense His mysteries.

The present Holy Father tells us that his chief concern is the clerical order. *Inter alia unum praecipue nos occupat: homines sacri ordinis eos omnino esse qui pro muneris officio esse debent.* He is convinced that on the character of the clergy mainly depend the present welfare and the future hopes of religion. He is convinced that in modern times the Church needs ministers of more than ordinary virtue, men who are ever ready to spend themselves for Christ and to suffer hard things for His sake—*paratissimi facere pro Christo et pati fortia.* Hence he observes with alarm the growth of a worldly spirit in some of the clergy—disregard for mental prayer, indifference to spiritual reading, neglect of self-examination—and he foretells with sorrow what will be the bitter fruits of such worldliness. Sacred duties will be callously performed, the light of faith will be darkened, dangerous novelties will be preferred to sound doctrine, human wisdom will be substituted for the Word of God, and pride and contumacy will take the place of the humility and meekness of Christ.

The chief concern of Pius X

Though, however, the Holy Father has reason to grieve, though there are abuses that need reformation, the general outlook is satisfactory; the clergy in the aggregate are admittedly excellent. Never, perhaps, in the history of the Church were they freer from error and division, more loyal to the See of Peter, more devoted to their flocks than they are to-day. Every-

The present state of the clergy

where throughout the Christian world they are upright and honourable members of society, and multitudes of them have shown remarkable energy and holy zeal—*plures e clero,* says Pius X, *gratulamur ignes coelestes concepisse.* What a spectacle of clerical harmony and self-denial have we not recently witnessed in France! What a well-educated, well-organized and efficient body are the priests of Germany! How compact, how intelligent, how progressive is the clerical party in Belgium! What a profound and beneficial influence the clergy exercise in the English-speaking countries of the new world—in Canada, in the United States, and in Australia; how admirably they combine the virtues of the active life with those that are passive and more sanctifying! In our own northern isles, how loyally has the *soggarth aroon* stood by the poor and the oppressed! With what courage have the priests of England and Scotland, as well as of Ireland, conducted the Bride of Christ from the Catacombs and crowned Her with glory in temples worthy of the Living God!

The clerical standard

But it may be asked by what standard are we judging the clergy. Is it by a worldly one, and from a purely human point of view? Certainly not; for though a priest should possess the natural and social virtues, though he should be a man in the best sense of the word, he should be much more. Those who lack the true Christian sentiment may imagine that ordinary goodness is sufficient even in his case. But we know otherwise. We know that he is ordained not merely to acquire but to exercise perfection—*ad*

exercendam perfectionem. We know with the Fathers of the Church that in principle and conduct he ought to be as much above any good layman as heaven is above earth. A layman is good if he avoids grievous sins; a priest is very imperfect if he does not endeavour to avoid even venial faults. A layman may lead an honourable life in the midst of riches, pleasures, and political turmoil; but a priest cannot entangle himself in purely secular affairs, he cannot seek honours or wealth, he cannot gratify flesh and blood, he must deny himself, he must be mature in virtue,[1] he must be humble and disinterested, he must be supernatural and Christ-like.

No other gifts no matter how brilliant, no other talents no matter how numerous, will supply for personal holiness. The priest who lacks this lacks everything. *Si desit sacerdoti, omnia desunt.*[2] He may have great learning, may be eloquent and popular, may possess skill in the management of business; but these qualifications are inadequate: without the knowledge of Christ, *supereminens scientia Christi,* they may be a source of injury to the Church and to individuals—*non raro detrimenti sunt flebilis causa.*[3] On the other hand a priest, however lowly—*vel infimus* [4]—if adorned with sanctity, can undertake and accomplish great things for the salvation of souls. In every age there are numbers of men like the Curé of Ars who illustrate the Scriptural saying that God chooses the foolish things of the world to confound the wise, the weak

[1] *Dignus et cujus probata vita senectus sit.*—Conc. Trid., Sess. xxiii. c. xiv.
[2] Pius X. [3] Ibid. [4] Ibid.

things to confound the strong. It is holiness of life alone that makes such men what they are, and that will make us what we should be—men conformed to the image of Christ, walking in newness of life, ministering to God in labours, in knowledge, in sweetness,[1] seeking Heaven above all things and ever striving to save souls—*qui unice tendant in coelestia et alios eodem adducere omni ope contendant.*[2]

Why are priests bound to such exalted sanctity? Because the Scriptures prescribe it, the offices of the ministry demand it, and the people expect it.[3] See how the Sacred Scripture addresses priests: You are ordained, it says to them, in the things that appertain to God; you are appointed to go and bear fruit, fruit that will be lasting; you are to abide in Christ; you are to love one another and to serve one another—whoever is greatest among you must become like the youngest, whoever is a ruler must become as a servant. You must learn to be meek, to be humble, and to be mild towards all men. You must deny yourself, and you must follow Christ.

The Sacred Scripture addresses priests

The offices of the priesthood require sacerdotal sanctity. Even those who offered bread and incense under the Old Law were bound to be spotless—*Sancti erunt Deo.* How much greater is the obligation of the ministers of the Christian dispensation. They are the dispensers of God's mysteries. Every day they

The duties of a priest require sanctity

[1] 2 Cor. v. [2] Pius X.

[3] See the last chapter and Appendix for fuller development of these reasons.

act in the name of Christ, they take His place, they are His ambassadors. He who hears them hears Christ. He who is sanctified by them is sanctified by Christ. He who is forgiven by them is forgiven by Christ. They bring the Son of God into our midst, place Him in our tabernacles, give Him to the multitude as food, carry Him on their breasts to the sick, and at the solemn moment of Benediction they are privileged to lift Him in blessing over the bowed heads of the faithful. Hence, at their ordination, the Church removes their profane garments, clothes them in the white robes of innocence, girdles them with the girdle of chastity, anoints their hands with holy oil that what they bless may be blessed, what they consecrate may be consecrated, and prays for the descent of the Holy Ghost on them, that they may have wisdom from on high, that their conduct may be irreproachable, and that the sweet odour of their lives may be the delight of the Church of God.[1]

What the people expect

The people expect a priest to be a man of God. They contribute generously to his support, and place him beyond all anxiety for his temporal concerns. In return they expect him to make God his portion, and to shun cupidity. They desire him to be an example to the faithful, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in chastity. They desire him to be a leaven in their midst, counteracting the corrupt tendencies of human nature, to be a friend who will pray for them and help them in all their sorrows, to be a minister of Christ who will not deny by his acts what he preaches

[1] *Pontifical.*

by his words, to be a pattern of virtue whose life will be an encouragement to the good, a warning to the tepid, and an argument against the wicked. They recognize to-day more than ever the importance of *personal* worth in a priest. In former ages rank, ecclesiastical or civil, counted for much. It gave prestige. But in modern times, when the spirit of democracy is in the ascendant, a man's influence in every station is largely determined by what he is and by what he does, by his character and conduct.

Hence Catholics wish to find a priest always worthy of the highest respect and veneration; they wish to behold in him a personification of the Christian ideal. Though they may appear unmoved by the crimes of worldlings, they are easily aroused, if not scandalized, by the peccadilloes of a priest, by an untruth, an incivility, a little vanity, or a little frivolity. *In ipso levia delicta essent maxima.* Others may go astray if they will, but the priest must not. He belongs to the people; he is their watchman, their pastor, their parent in Christ. They will not allow him to deteriorate, they will not suffer the gold of the sanctuary to be dimmed, they will preserve him holy, innocent, and undefiled.[1]

A man of prayer

How are priests to acquire the holiness peculiar to their calling? What are the *means of sanctification*? Pius X, in his Exhortation to the clergy, so often quoted in this opening chapter, points out the three principal ones, prayer, spiritual reading, and self-examination

[1] Heb. vii.

—prayer as the uplifting of the soul to God, spiritual reading as the light of the intellect, and self-examination as the only way of rectifying the conscience. Of these means prayer is by far the most important. So close is the connexion between prayer and sanctity that one cannot exist without the other. The priest who wishes to be faithful to his duty must excel in prayer—*Sacerdotem precandi studio eximie deditum esse oportere.*[1] And yet how deficient, how slack, we are! With what little profit we often recite our Breviary! It is a beautiful collection of thoughts and aspirations, but many a time we hurry through it as mechanically as if we were prayer-mills, with merely external attention, plying our muscles no doubt, but leaving the nobler faculties of the soul torpid and frozen: *Liber psalmorum*, says Cardinal Bellarmine, *quem omnes ecclesiastici legunt, pauci admodum intelligunt.* Were we to sanctify each day with the devout recitation of the Psalter, the morning with the 118th Psalm, the afternoon with Vespers and Complin, and the evening with the anticipated Matins of the day following, we should soon be little less than saints. We should endeavour therefore to familiarize ourselves with the spirit and general meaning of the different parts of the Office, especially those parts which frequently recur. We should read the psalms in English side by side with the corresponding Latin; we should make use of St. Liguori's explanation of the Office; we should occasionally apply ourselves to a fuller commentary, such as Bellarmine's *Explanatio in*

[1] Pius X.

Psalmos.[1] How far removed from true devotion—how unlike adoration in spirit and in truth—is the mere perfunctory recitation of the Breviary! How unworthy of a priest to honour God with his lips only! What a dull and sluggish performance it is to vocalize daily a multitude of words and sentences with little meaning and less heart!

The Mass

The celebration of the Holy Eucharist is another official duty of a priest. What could be at once more simple, more sublime, or more capable of keeping us in memory of Christ, and of our dependence on Him? Its essential feature is, indeed, a brief and passing action, the consecration, but is supplemented and surrounded by a series of petitions and impressive ceremonies which wonderfully unfold its mystic meaning. What a privilege for us priests to be the ministers of the Mass, to be appointed to offer up gifts and sacrifices in the New Law—*offerre dona et sacrificia pro peccatis*[2]—to present to Heaven an unspotted Host, to act as mediators between God and man. With what lively faith, with what reverence, with what humble sentiments, with what gratitude, we ought approach the Eucharistic altar. "Oh! how clean ought those hands to be, how pure that mouth, how holy that body, how free from blemish the heart of a priest, into whom the Author of Purity so often enters!"[3]

Passing over several other prayers such as the Rosary, which a good priest makes use of every day,

[1] See also Batifol's *Histoire du Bréviaire*, which may be had in English (Longmans & Co.); *The Divine Office*, by Cardinal Bona; and *Refectio Spiritualis*, by Monsignor Parkinson.

[2] Heb. v.

[3] *Imitation*, bk. iv. c. xi.

we come to the form of prayer on which Pius X lays the strongest emphasis, namely, mental prayer. *Hac in parte illud caput est ut rerum aeternarum meditationi certum aliquod spatium quotidie concedatur.*[1] Daily meditation on the eternal truths *illud caput est,* that is a matter of paramount importance for a priest. Doubtless nearly every young man, while the sacerdotal unction is still fresh upon him, continues faithful to mental prayer, and consequently fervent in all his duties. But there is considerable danger that familiarity with sacred things and intercourse with the world may after a time make him lukewarm, then careless, and, finally, cold and indifferent. In the presence of such a danger, if he discontinues meditation, above all if he makes light of it, he is apt to become engrossed in the things of earth, to grow proud and contumacious, and finally to be lost. To the public eye he may still appear a man of God, an active energetic priest, prudent in speech, punctual to the call of duty, reliable in an emergency. Nevertheless, his labours are without result, at least without lasting result ; his voice is not the voice of the good shepherd ; his activity makes a noise, flows away emptily and sometimes is even a source of bad example. On the other hand, blessed is the man who meditates on the divine law. *Beatus vir qui in lege Domini meditatur, voluntas ejus permanet die ac nocte.* He knows and remembers Christ, he has a lively faith in the Mass, he has a grasp of things

Mental prayer

[1] Pius X. Of meditation books two or three may be mentioned: Cardinal Newman's, Cardinal Wiseman's, Challoner's, and *Meditations for Ecclesiastics.*

invisible, he keeps alive the fire of charity in his heart, he preaches with an earnestness that is natural, he seeks souls with a perseverance that never flags, in a word, he does all things well—*omnia quaecumque facit prosperabuntur.*[1]

Devotional reading

The second means of priestly sanctification is the reading of sound books of devotion, more especially the books of Holy Writ. Without such reading a priest will lose touch with spiritual things, his thoughts will revolve in a purely secular atmosphere, his lamp of meditation will die out for want of oil, and his heart will grow hard and self-centred. Good books, says Pius X, act the part of faithful candid friends. They fill the mind with wholesome images, they warn us of our duties, they lay bare our self-delusions and disturb the treacherous calm in which we repose—*dolosam obturbant tranquillitatem*[2]—they show us the loveliness of virtue and stimulate us to its practice by motives and by examples—*repressas in animo coelestes voces suscitant.*

But what books ought a priest read ? With what motive ought he apply himself to ascetical theology ? As regards the first question, there can be no doubt but that the most profitable reading for a priest is the Book of books. It is more profound in wisdom, more varied in character and style, richer in eloquence, more copious in examples, illustrations, and

[1] *Mali sacerdotes nunquam meditantur.*
Tepidi sacerdotes raro meditantur.
Boni sacerdotes ordinarie meditantur.
Ferventes sacerdotes quotidie meditantur.
—Mierts.

[2] *Exhortatio ad clerum.*

parables, more apt to teach, more certain to touch the heart, than any other book that was ever written. After the Bible comes the *Imitation of Christ* (a chapter every day), the writings of St. Francis of Sales, the *Confessions* of St. Augustine, Cardinal Newman's sketches of the early Fathers, his *Sermons* before and after his conversion, the best Lives of the Saints, the chief works of Faber and Grou, and the devotional writings of Cardinal Manning.[1] Nowadays, the works of the Fathers or selections from them are frequently accessible in English. For instance, during the Tractarian movement at Oxford, a translation of Patristic writings was brought out under the name of the Ante-Nicene and Post-Nicene Library, "odd volumes of which," remarks Dr. Scannell, "may be got occasionally at a small price."

It is advisable for a priest, when looking out for exemplars and teachers, to select those Saints who are distinguished for intellectual gifts and practical wisdom of a high order, for men like St. Paul, St. Chrysostom, St. Francis of Sales, St. Vincent de Paul, for women like St. Catherine of Sienna, and St. Teresa. Such saints, "as perfectly human as they are perfectly divine," will teach him that breadth of view, that manly generosity, and that practical working activity which the Church needs in her ministers nowadays, if lost ground is to be recovered, and numbers of Christians to be saved from defection.

In his spiritual lecture, a priest should always keep his own needs, his own improvement, steadily in view. For it would be as fatal a mistake to read

[1] See list of books in Appendix.

ascetical works solely with a view to others as it would be to practise meditation merely as a preparation for preaching. In the words of Father Faber, "the study of ascetical theology is always . . . *dangerous* to those who are not making an honest effort to push themselves forward towards a holy life." It blinds them to their own faults, it "fills them with all sorts of *conceit* and delusion," and gives them an unenviable resemblance to the pharisee, who went up to the Temple to pray and remained to boast. Heroic thoughts are contagious, but they do not constitute practical heroism; and hence, continues the enlightened Oratorian, the spiritual reading that does not make people mortified and humble, only inflates them with pride and averts them from the truth. A priest, therefore, should apply his daily spiritual lecture to himself, and beware of imitating "those ungracious pastors who reck not their own rede."

Self-examination

The third aid to sacerdotal sanctification mentioned by Pius X is self-examination. The priest who neglects it cannot have a proper sense of sin, cannot be sincerely humble. He may be seemingly pious, and yet have a deluded conscience. He may be Christian on the surface and pagan in the heart. He may fulminate against sin and cling to it himself; he may pour wine into the wounds of others and leave his own untended—*Saucius ipse secus viam jacet.*[1] The children of the world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. They attend carefully to their

[1] *Exhortatio ad clerum.*

own business, they examine their expenditure and their receipts, they have a periodic taking of stock, they make up their accounts with the help of an auditor, they grieve over losses, they arrange plans and precautions for future emergencies. But we, the children of light, show ourselves more anxious for honours and emoluments than for holiness; we grow weary of our calling; we rarely explore our hearts—self-introspection is too troublesome, too disagreeable, too practical; like the lazy man in the Book of Proverbs, we allow the spiritual vineyard to be covered over with thorns and nettles; we never consider how retrograde we are in our piety; we never weep over our follies; we do not strive day by day to root some sinful tendency out of our hearts. What, then, is a priest's duty in this matter? First, he should, in his daily meditation, review his conduct with reference to some definite point; then he should every evening—*quotidie sub noctem antequam somnus obrepat*[1]—make an act of heartfelt sorrow for the faults of the day; and lastly he should, if possible, approach the Sacrament of Penance every week after a diligent preparation. Confession is of the utmost importance for a priest; yet there is always considerable danger that it may be made use of very irregularly, that it may become a mere matter of routine, a mere request for absolution, or that it may be postponed from week to week. Careful preparation, a sense of sinfulness, a prudent confessor, and regularity—nothing more is needed to make the tribunal of Penance all that it should be for a priest,

[1] Pius X.

namely, a source of strength and comfort in many a difficulty and many a disappointment. *Quamdiu mortali hoc peregrinamur in corpore, habemus opus ductore pervigili.*[1] As long as we live we all need a friend, one to whom we can lay bare our temptations, our defects of character, our backslidings, one who will advise us and even admonish us with candour and with firmness. "It is better to be rebuked by a wise man than to be deceived by the flattery of fools."[2] St. Francis of Sales says we cannot take too much care in choosing a spiritual guide, and the words of the wise man are to the same effect: *Consiliarius sit tibi unus de mille.*[3] If such a one cannot be found in our immediate neighbourhood but must be sought at a distance, we can at least have recourse to him from time to time, and let him see that we are sincerely anxious for his counsel and his help. It too often happens that a young priest deludes his conscience or goes astray because he finds no confessor to advise or rebuke him, no one to stimulate his zeal or to probe his maladies.[4]

Such are the chief means of sanctification pointed out by Pius X. They may seem old-fashioned, but they are infallible. Whoever neglects them will lose all relish for the things of God; he will grow worldly-minded; he will discharge the duties of the ministry without heart, though perhaps not without professional exactitude, and "neither the bleeding wounds of his own soul nor the lamentations of the Church will ever rouse him from his torpor."[5] On

[1] St. Laur. Just., *de Imit. et Reg. Prae.*, 3, n. 5.
[2] Eccles. vii.
[3] Eccles. vi.
[4] M'Namara, *Enchiridion Clericorum.*
[5] Pius X.

the contrary, he who is faithful to prayer, to spiritual reading and to the warnings of his conscience, cannot fail to be a good priest. He will be intent on the salvation of souls; he will strive daily to advance in knowledge and wisdom for the sake of others—*ut aliis aedificet;* he will be diligent in catechizing; he will preach not that people may think of him, but that they may think of Christ Crucified; he will love the confessional; he will be a zealous director of confraternities; he will be solicitous for the education of the young, "the fairest hope of Church and State;"[1] and, like the deacon Lawrence, he will prize the poor as religion's chiefest treasure.

"Come, Holy Ghost, Creator Spirit, come!
With strength inspire him and with light invest:
Guard Thou his steps and make his heart Thy home,
And nerve his weakness with Thine unction blest."[2]

BOOKS OF REFERENCE.

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The Priesthood. St. Chrysostom. (Translated by Fr. Boyle, C.M.)
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The Priest, His Character and Work. Canon Keating.
Lex Levitarum. Bishop Hedley.
The Priest on the Mission. Canon Oakley.
The Young Priest. Cardinal Vaughan.
Le Guide du jeune Prêtre. L'Abbé Reaume.
Pastoral Theology. Bishop Stang.
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[1] Pius X. [2] Oakley.

CHAPTER II

Sunt qui scire volunt ut aedificent et charitas est.

A PRIEST who is holy will also be studious. His conscientiousness and his zeal will prompt him to go on increasing his store of knowledge as far as circumstances allow. He may not have much leisure at his disposal. He may have a large congregation, many pressing duties, and many parochial occupations. But no matter how busy he may be, observes Cardinal Gibbons, he will find time for study if he is in earnest, in other words, if he makes up his mind to moderate his recreations and to avoid gossip and useless visits (*otiosae circuitiones*).[1] Even active politicians like Mr. Gladstone, indefatigable Churchmen like Cardinal Manning, zealous pastors like Canon Sheehan, have managed, in spite of their manifold external labours, to keep in daily contact with the master-minds of the world. But when a parish is not large, when the Catholics are few, when a priest has no engrossing business on hands, there can be no excuse for a neglect of reading; on the contrary, there are many reasons why a taste for books should be cultivated. Such a taste opens out an "illimitable vista of pleasures; it is most easily satisfied, one of the cheapest and one of the least

Advantages of a taste for reading

[1] *Imitation*, bk. i. c. xx.

dependent on age, seasons, and varying conditions of life. . . . It illumines dreary hours . . . stores the mind with pleasant thoughts, fills up unoccupied interstices and enforced leisures of an active life, makes one forget, for a time at least, anxieties and sorrows, and if it is judiciously managed it is one of the most powerful means of training character, of disciplining, and elevating thought."[1]

But if a priest has no taste for books, what will become of him in times of ministerial inactivity? Idleness, the chief source of all mischief, will brood over him, darkening his intellect, blighting all his noble aspirations, and giving free scope to pursuits and pastimes of a low type. No matter how eminent he may have been at one time, an idle priest rapidly deteriorates. He loses caste. *Sacerdos otiosus, sacerdos vitiosus.* "The ecclesiastic," says the Abbé Dieulin, "who gives up study becomes narrow and vulgar in his ideas, low in his sentiments, worldly in his tastes, rustic in his behaviour, and ignoble in his manner of living; whereas he who continues to be a student is invariably characterized by a certain nobility of intellect and of heart."[2]

Nowadays, when education is almost universal, when the daily paper is a sort of encyclopedia, when knowledge can be cheaply purchased in every market, anyone who comes forward as a leader of men and as an exponent of Christianity should be a man of large learning and of studious habits. Otherwise his mission will be a failure. His sermons will be dull and commonplace. His advice in the confessional

[1] Lecky, *Map of Life.* [2] *Le bon curé au XIX^me siècle.*

will rarely rise above vague generalities. His presence in public movements will command no attention or influence. He will not be equal to educated laymen. He will not be able to encounter clever enemies, much less to give a lucid exposition of Catholic doctrine on all the leading questions of the day.[1] He will not possess that variety and accuracy of knowledge[2]—*doctrinam variam et exquisitam*—that grasp of philosophy and theology, that breadth of historical information, and that acquaintance with physical science, which, according to Leo XIII,[3] are required in one who undertakes to defend the Catholic faith.

How to read

To a young priest anxious to manage his studies judiciously Dupanloup's motto may be commended —*Multus labor, multa methodus in labore, multa in methodo constantia.* Earnest, methodic, persevering study. One who has no fixed time for reading, and who reads in a haphazard fashion, will never make much progress. "Reading for reading's sake is one of the worst and commonest and most unwholesome habits we have. . . . The habit of reading wisely is most difficult to acquire, needing a strong resolution and infinite pains."[4] Definite questions ought to be taken up occasionally, and studied with accuracy and completeness. Such questions may be suggested by theological conferences, or by discussions in the public press. In the course of one's reading it is

[1] "The clergy must be equal not only to lay Catholics but also to Protestants, lay and clerical."—Lord Acton, *Letters*, No. 54.

[2] "Yet accuracy is not a mark of the ecclesiastical mind."—*Lex Levitarum*, Hedley.

[3] Encyclical, February 15, 1882. [4] Ruskin.

advisable to mark striking passages, or even to write them in note-books or on cards alphabetically arranged for future reference.

"Some books are to be tasted, that is read only in parts, others are to be swallowed, that is read, but not curiously, some few are to be chewed and digested, that is read wholly and with diligence and attention," [1] and many there are which should not be read at all. The great difficulty is to discriminate between books, to make a small selection out of the multitudes that swarm on every side. "True books are not easier to find than true men." [2] Even a list of useful books, such as that given in the Appendix, cannot guard a young priest from many mistakes and errors. He is inclined to seek out pastures for himself, he is deceived by highly-coloured notices and reviews, he is tempted to read for the mere pleasure of reading. Hours are spent—squandered we should say—on papers, magazines, the latest novels and books of the passing hour, and scarcely one hour is given to "the books of all time," to those immortal and universal authors, "the mighty minds of old," such as *Shakespeare, Scott, Cervantes, Dante,* whose true value can be realized only by habitual reading. "The world has long ago closed the great assize of letters . . . and if our taste does not coincide with the judgment of the world it must be regarded as ill-formed and unhealthy." [3] "Few things tend so much to impair a sound literary

The choice of books

[1] Bacon, *Of Studies.*

[2] "It is a wise plan to belong to a circulating library, and to see a book before buying it."—Scannell, *The Priest's Studies.*

[3] Frederic Harrison, on *Choice of Books.*

perception and to *vulgarize the character* as the habit of constantly saturating the mind with inferior literature." [1]

The class-books of one's college course ought not to be discarded after ordination. No doubt they are concise, at times obscure, and therefore need to be largely supplemented, especially on all modern questions and difficulties. Nevertheless, they are very useful. They inculcate fundamental principles in each branch of ecclesiastical science, they throw into bold relief and into language of wonderful precision, not the speculations of a school, a sect, or a country, but the leading tenets and traditions of ten thousand Catholic doctors, approved by the Church, and exemplified in the lives of saints and martyrs.

"Studies must be bounded in by experience." A priest must not be a bookworm, a mere theorist. He must not, as has been well said, leave his understanding at home on his library shelves. He must know things as they are, not merely as they ought to be. He must study nature and art as well as books. He must acquire common sense as well as learning. He must be a man of the world as well as a student. He must know the men amidst whom he lives, their characters, their manners, their principles. He must supplement theory by means of observation and social intercourse, but above all with the help of the confessional, which "teaches more than all the treatises of the Salmanticenses." [2]

A priest not a mere bookworm

[1] Lecky, *Map of Life.*
[2] Cardinal Manning, *The Eternal Priesthood.*

"He cannot be a perfect man
Who is not tried and tutor'd in the world;
Experience is by industry achieved
And perfected by the swift course of time." [1]

. . . . . .

The science of human conduct

In the first place, a priest should apply himself earnestly to the science of human conduct and qualify himself daily more and more to be a teacher and a guide to others. In the confessional as well as in the pulpit he should proclaim the counsels, the beatitudes, the "better gifts of the Gospel," no less than the Decalogue. He should not allow himself to become a mere *judex criminum*, a mere surveyor of the boundaries of right and wrong. He should not guide his own conduct or that of others solely by "the signal posts of danger." Instead of always asking, "Am I bound?" "Is there an obligation?" he should rather cultivate that more honourable inquiry, "What is the better course?" "What is the wiser and safer and the better for others as well as for myself?" [2] Christianity is not a dry code of laws—it is love—it is the following of Christ; it is a perfect ideal held up to all, copied with varying success; it is, therefore, something far higher and nobler than mere casuistry, or the restricted outlook of moral theology. Nevertheless, a confessor will often have to be content with the bare essentials of Christian righteousness, with the bruised reed and the smoking flax. He is likely to meet many frail and slothful

[1] Shakespeare.
[2] See *Ecclesiastical Discourses* of Archbishop Ullathorne.

penitents, creeping along the verge of the precipice, hoping to live as mercenaries in their Father's house, from whom it would be vain and hazardous to expect more than the minimum of duty consistent with Christian morality. Now, if moral theology has any utility, it is surely to teach all professional guides of souls the least that will suffice for the retaining of God's friendship and for the avoidance of serious sin. But *this minimum must be consistent with evangelical truth*—it must not lower Christ's standard. A confessor's desire to be lenient—to dispense the grace of absolution—must not involve him in a false position. He must not sanction or seem to sanction any false principle of conduct—any system of boycotting, for example, any evasion of justice, any practice of equivocation, any occasion of sin, which is reprobated by man's moral sense, by the common sense of the faithful, or by the unanimous agreement of theologians. He must be on his guard against the lax tendency and subtle reasoning of certain writers which originated not a few degenerate doctrines, to the great scandal not only of rigidists but even of the ordinary faithful.[1]

Not mere casuistry

As a medical man does not limit his services to the sickly and the decrepit, but endeavours to preserve and improve the health of the entire community, so, too, it is a priest's duty, as the spiritual physician of the people, to study the principles of prevention and amelioration as well as the principles of cure. He will meet

[1] See the propositions condemned by Alexander VII and Innocent XI; and consider the many opinions, even of eminent men. that have been abandoned.

many generous souls in and out of the confessional —children anxious more and more to please their Father, innocent natures endowed with lofty aspirations, prodigals returning with gratitude and love— and for all these he will need to understand and to apply the principles of the higher Christian life. "Those principles are found in the Bible, the Fathers, and in spiritual writers. To bring them together and place them side by side with the extenuated forms of goodness, as presented by ordinary casuistry, would be equally beneficial to priests and people. It would make them as familiar with the Christian virtues as our popular books of moral theology do with the depths of human wickedness. It would constantly bring back to their minds the important fact that the Gospel calls, not merely for negative goodness, but for active devotion to all that is best. Indeed a more frequent appeal to the great principles of natural morality and of the Christian life would both elevate and simplify our ordinary casuistry. Its complex rules and endless applications have put them more or less out of sight, and to get back to them is often like emerging out of darkness into daylight. . . . In the life of a true Christian there should be no room for what is mean or unworthy, any more than for what is sinful. He should be as truthful, as reliable, as high-minded as the very best of those among whom he moves; and the religious training which does not lead him in that direction is essentially defective. In fact, for such as dwell in the higher and purer spheres of virtue there is no more need for ordinary casuistry than there is for the distinctions of criminal law in the case of a man

of pure life and generous aspirations. A few *fundamental, obvious principles* suffice to guide the action of the one and the other; or if casuistry there be, it is the nobler casuistry of honour or of the Gospel."[1]

That nobler casuistry is necessary for one who is appointed to guide others in the things that appertain to God. He must have a grasp of the principles of the spiritual life, he must study the most efficient and the most attractive means for securing the sanctification of the people, he must be able to accommodate his direction to all classes of society, to those who are striving to be perfect as well as to frail groping sinners. For the common range of direction a priest may be recommended to read and re-read the *Spiritual Combat*, "that grand work which occupied St. Francis of Sales for seventeen years."[2] Perhaps there is no spiritual writer whose writings are more worthy of attention than those of the saintly Bishop of Geneva.[3] He was a saint as well as an accomplished man of the world, and his characteristic note, as Dr. Scannell points out, was prudence and the avoidance of all exaggeration. "Hence he is specially suited to be the guide of those who have to direct persons living in the world or religious engaged in active work."

Treatises on Ascetical Theology

Moderation and exactitude are not always to be found in those who treat of asceticism. As Father Faber complains, "it has sometimes been the fashion

[1] Hogan, *Clerical Studies.*

[2] Father Faber quoted in *The Priest's Studies.*

[3] *Introduction to a Devout Life, Treatise on the Love of God, Letters to Persons in Religion and in the World,* etc.

"Faber's *Growth in Holiness*, as a manual of ascetical theology, is unsurpassed."—Dr. Scannell.

to write spiritual works in a strain of hyperbole and exaggeration, quite alien to the calm discretion which is needful in handling such matters, and the upshot of which is to represent all holiness to be in the cloister and all the world beside a reprobate mass." Such treatises, having been compiled in the cloister or for it, devote their chief attention to the refined perfections which flourish in monastic seclusion and rarely notice the plebeian virtues which struggle for an existence amidst the thorns and briers of the world. Moreover, they are so mystical in tone and language, so imaginative, so deficient in the critical spirit, as to be altogether unsuitable to the analytic temper of modern times.[1] In giving advice, therefore, to penitents and others, a priest should be careful to take into account their degree of spiritual advancement, and to recommend to them such devotional treatises and such lives of the servants of God as will teach them to sanctify the duties of the home and of the market-place. No doubt the acts of the martyrs, the visions of the mystics, and the legends and miracles of the saints form the most poetic and the most supernatural page in Church history; they are an unbroken chain of signs and wonders, and they supply sublime and fascinating ideals of Christian virtue to which men will always turn for their highest inspirations. But the multitude have need of a simpler nutrition, of a spiritual medicine suited to their lives, their

[1] " A very common error is to place an exaggerated confidence in the biographers of the Saints. People seem to transfer to those pious writers some of the respect due to the Saints themselves."—Delahaye, S.J., *The Legends of the Saints.*

difficulties, their capacities. They have need to be taught that true spirituality is not something remote and impossible, but rather a certain nobility of character, within everyone's reach, which enters into all man's activities, all his relations, social and domestic. They have need of examples of homely virtue, examples which they may hope to imitate, examples that will awaken emulation as well as admiration, and stimulate them to perseverance in such common duties as honesty, temperance, simple faith, and elementary charity.

Useful books for the laity

There are several books which go far to supply the want of which we speak. It will suffice to mention a few: *The Mirror of True Womanhood*, and *True Men as we need them*, Rev. B. O'Reilly; *Great Catholic Laymen*, Horgan; *Thoughts for all Times*, Vaughan; *The Layman's Day*, and *Jewels of Prayer*, Percy FitzGerald; *The Science of Life*, Mrs. Craigie; *The Angel of the House*, Patmore; *Letters to Young Men*, Lacordaire; *La Femme Forte*, Landriot; *Letters to a Young Man*, Eugene de Margerie.[1]

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Dogma

In the study of Dogma a priest should endeavour to expand the compressed pages of his class-books and to acquire a fuller, richer, and more satisfying conception of the fundamental truths which occupy men's minds and influence their lives. With this view he should have recourse to reading, reflection, and observation. He should

[1] "The reading of pious books is one of the best spiritual medicines that can be prescribed for seculars. It is for them meditation in its easiest form."—Bishop Moriarty, *Allocutions*.

not allow his Catholic principles and beliefs to be obliterated by the too frequent perusal of non-Catholic writings. On the contrary, he should take as his guide the best Catholic authors, such as Newman, and the leading Catholic reviews, so that he may be able to present Catholic truth in an attractive garb to the public. There will always be multitudes, even outside the Church, anxious to believe—yearning for a message from on high, yearning for immortality and union with the Infinite Good. But, amidst the babel of voices, amidst the dreary wastes of scepticism and indifference, who will speak to them "with authority," who will encourage and sustain them, who will diminish their difficulties and point out to them "the way, the truth, and the life"? Is it not the priest? Yes, the priest, carefully discriminating between Catholic doctrine and the views of theologians, between what is certain and what is conjectural, between the permanent, substantial, structure of truth and its temporary accidents, comes forward and speaks unfalteringly as the mouthpiece of an infallible dispensation. "Such clear and unhesitating affirmation, supported by a good life, has done more to implant and spread the faith all over the world than arguments and miracles."[1]

Hence we say to a young priest: Study precision. Avoid the exaggerations and the looseness of statement into which clerics are sometimes said to lapse. Do not inflict on religion *the grave injury* of "asserting or denying in its name what in reality does not belong to it."[2] Endeavour to realize the antagonism

[1] Hogan, *Clerical Studies.* [2] St. Thomas, *Opusc.* ix, Proem.

of the modern mind to whatever cannot be verified, to whatever cannot be tested by the standard of utility. Examine the temper of the people, in particular of those in your immediate environment—the views they hold, the difficulties they experience, the tendencies they manifest—what journals they read, what leaders they follow, what prejudices blind them.

Then you will be better able to throw into relief "the aspects of the Catholic system which best fit in with the intellectual, moral, and social needs of those with whom you have to deal." Moreover, take note of the conclusions of leading experts in the different branches of science—rejoice at their investigations, welcome every fresh advance, every new discovery, they make, and at the same time never fear, never anticipate any collision with the true faith, properly interpreted, which rests on the word of Christ, and has survived the brunt of twenty centuries.[1] Thus you will be able to "take possession of the common ground upon which reason, experience, and Christianity meet;" you will be able to sympathize with individual souls as they face the ever-recurring problem of religion, and choose for themselves belief or scepticism, life or death; and you will be better qualified to demonstrate by telling arguments and by concrete examples the excellence of Catholicity, the reasonable solution it

[1] Should anything "seem *proved* by astronomer or geologist, or chronologist or antiquarian, or ethnologist, in contradiction to the dogmas of faith, that point will eventually turn out, first, not to be proved at all, or, secondly, not contradictory, or, thirdly, not contradictory to anything really revealed, but to something which has been *confused with revelation.*"—Newman, *Idea of a University.*

offers of the riddle of the universe, the range it affords to man's highest aspirations, and the peace and virtue it instils into all its faithful adherents.

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Sacred Scriptures

No subject must engage your attention so constantly as the Sacred Scriptures—*eloquia Dei, eloquia casta.* They give to religion all the charm of a personal communication; they present dogma in animated epistles, set forth a rule of life in concrete examples, harmonize prayer to the lyre of David, and unveil divine mysteries in the parables and deeds of the Son of Man. They are written that we may have hope,[1] that amidst the turmoil of human affairs we may retain heart and courage.[2] They are intended by God to be the light, the life, and the nourishment of the soul.[3] With what eagerness, therefore, as Leo XIII (November, 1893), suggests in his Encyclical on Sacred Scripture, ought you have recourse to this treasury of truth and virtue, with what love and constancy ought you pore over its pages. If you read the Bible in the light in which it was written, if you read it continuously, book by book, and without the constant interruptions of a commentator, you will come to realize its marvellous beauty, its sublime spirituality, and you will gradually acquire some of the unction and eloquence which warm its pages.

In addition to revealed truth "Providence requires us to make use of human science for the

[1] Rom. xv.
[2] *Regula Pastoralis,* pt. ii. cap. xi.
[3] Austin, *De Doct. Christ.*

salvation of the nations, and thus to imitate the most illustrious Fathers of the Church, who assigned to reason the task of engendering, nourishing, and defending the deposit of faith."[1] At the present day especially, when the authority of Sacred Scripture is often denied, and when men view the problems of life merely from a natural standpoint, "the most potent means," says the great Pontiff, "to eradicate the erroneous opinions propagated through all classes of society is the right use of the traditional philosophy of the Catholic Church." Therefore, it is incumbent on a priest to revise his philosophical studies, to read and digest sound Catholic treatises, and to familiarize himself with the leading aspects of man's origin, destiny, and social rights. If he neglects those studies, if he shuns the fountains of truth, if he drinks in the sophisms of every fledgling writer in a magazine, how can he pity and reprove the doubts of "all classes of society," how can he convince and confirm his brethren? "Will he not seem illiberal and irresponsive if he knows nothing of such men as Kant, Spinoza, Schelling, Mill, Spencer, etc.—the saints and sages of the age—and on the other hand will he not be considered large-minded and sympathetic if he can say, 'Yes, I know those men, I know their lives. I know what they advance. I have measured it all. It is dust beside the pure gold of Catholic philosophy.'"[2]

The traditional philosophy of the Church

"Spiritual men too much neglect the study of

[1] *Aeterni Patris*, Leo XIII, 1879.
[2] Canon Sheehan, *Essays and Lectures*.

nature in view of God. . . . They blink before it, as though it came of the Devil or were the property of godless scientific men." [1] They forget that it is the handwriting of God Himself, that it is a book from every page of which we may learn the invisible attributes of the Creator—His power, His wisdom, His divinity.[2] In fact "there is no creature so little and so vile as not to show forth the goodness of God,"[3] so that "if thy heart is right every creature will be to thee a mirror of life and a book of holy doctrine."

The Book of Nature

> "One impulse from a vernal wood
> May teach thee more of man,
> Of moral evil and of good,
> Than all the sages can."

For nature never does betray the heart that loves her; it is her privilege to lead from joy to joy, and so to impress the mind with quietness and beauty and with lofty thoughts that neither evil tongues, rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men, nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all the dreary intercourse of daily life, shall e'er disturb the cheerful faith that all which we behold is full of blessings.[4] To this Wordsworthian view of nature St. Bernard seems to subscribe. Saint, ruler, and man of action though he was, he tells us that from its teachings we may reap an ampler, richer store of knowledge than from constant poring over books. *Experto crede,* he says, *aliquid amplius invenies in silvis quam in libris. . . . An non montes stillant dulce-*

[1] Rickaby, S.J., *Waters that go smoothly.* [2] Rom. i.
[3] *Imitation,* bk. ii., chap iv. [4] "Tintern Abbey."

dine et colles fluent lac et mel, et valles abundant frumento?[1] Did not Christ Himself note the phenomena and the wonders of nature—fiery sunsets, fig-trees bursting into leaf, lightning flashing from the East, tender seedlings springing up mysteriously from the earth? Did He not tell thee to mark the lilies of the field, how they grow, and the birds of the air, how the Heavenly Father feeds them; and is it not His wish that, by knowing and admiring whatever is fair and good—*quaecumque amabilia*[2]—thou shouldst rise upwards along the scale of being to the contemplation and fruition of Infinity Itself?

"Leave, then, the prison of your own reasonings, leave the town, the work of man, the haunt of sin, go forth, far from the tents of Cedar and the slime of Babylon; with the patriarch go forth to meditate in the field, and *from the splendours of the work imagine the unimaginable glory of the Architect.* Mount some bold eminence and look back, when the sun is high and full upon the earth, when mountains, cliffs, and sea rise up before you like a brilliant pageant, with outlines noble and graceful, and tints and shadows soft, clear, and harmonious, giving depth and unity to the whole; and then go through the forest or fruitful field, or along meadow and stream, and listen to the distant country sounds, and drink in the fragrant air which is poured around you in Spring and Summer; or go among the gardens, and delight your senses with the grace and splendour, and the various sweetness of the flowers you find there, then think

[1] S. Bernardi, *Epis.* 106, ad Henric. Murdach.
[2] Phil. iv. 8.

of the almost mysterious influence upon the mind of particular scents, or the emotion which some gentle, peaceful strain excites in us, or how soul and body are rapt and carried away captive by the concord of musical sounds, when the ear is open to their power; and then, when you have ranged through sights and sounds and odours, and your heart kindles and your voice is full of praise and worship, reflect—not that they tell you nothing of their Maker—but that they are the poorest and *dimmest glimmerings of His glory*, and the very refuse of His exuberant riches, and but the dusky smoke which precedes the flame compared with Him who made them." [1]

The proper study of mankind is man

The part of nature that demands closest observation is man—the sole monarch of the earth. "Though sullied and dishonoured he is still divine." Though a frail child of dust, yet "how noble in reason, how infinite in faculties, in action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god." Though mean and fickle, with what constancy he struggles after truth. Whoever wishes to be his guide and comforter must diligently study his nature, the passions that blind it, the conflicting propensities that hurry it to and fro, the tangled motives that dominate it. He must consult those master-minds of the past who by pen or pencil have laid bare the secrets of man's nature. He must endeavour to read in his own heart as in a mirror the trials and

[1] Cardinal Newman, *Discourses to Mixed Congregations*, xiv. See also his *Idea of a University* (third discourse); the *Excursion* and the shorter poems of Wordsworth; the *Seasons* of Thomson, etc.

experiences to which his fellow-mortals are subject. And he must study the tone and temper of his age, of the men and women amidst whom his lot is cast. The priest who is ignorant of human nature—who ignores the teaching of history and biography—who never broadens his sympathies by contact with a Shakespeare, a Dickens, or a Walter Scott—will be narrow in his outlook, theoretic in his preaching, unsuccessful in much of his ministry; he will be blind to local colouring; he will overlook differences of age and sex; he will misjudge the views and aspirations of the people; in one word, he will misapply all the best principles of the Gospel. Realizing the disadvantages of the mere theorist, St. Francis Xavier thus advises one of his missionaries:—

"Wherever you happen to be, though only *en passant*, try to learn from upright and experienced persons the general character of the people, their inclinations, the customs of the country, the methods of government, the tone of public opinion, and, in a word, *all the features of civil intercourse*.[1] For I assure you that such general knowledge is very useful to a missionary who wishes to counteract spiritual maladies, and to have remedies for those who come to him. It will make you *practical* in the pulpit and in the confessional. It will save you from many surprises, and give you tact and influence in your dealings with others. Men of the world are wont to despise the admonitions of those who have no real knowledge of the world. You ought, there-

[1] To read the daily Press of a nation judiciously—with the philosopher's eye and mind—is to live *in friendly intimacy with the nation*. See *The Training of a Priest*, by Dr. Smith.

fore work, hard for the acquisition of this knowledge, and seek it as diligently in living books and in the society of the intelligent, as you formerly sought philosophy and theology in the products of the press."

BOOKS OF REFERENCE :

Clerical Studies, Hogan.
The Training of a Priest, Smith.
Lex Levitarum, Hedley.
The Ambassador of Christ, Gibbons.
Letters to a Young Theologian, Hettinger.

CHAPTER III

Si habuero omnem scientiam, caritatem autem non habuero nihil sum.

In our converse with fellow-priests let us, above all things, have constant mutual charity.[1] It is better than prophetic gifts, than miraculous powers, than all knowledge, than even the faith that moveth mountains. It is proof against all things; it is trustful, hopeful, patient, and never falleth away. What greater happiness can there be, what in life is more comforting, than to dwell in amity with our fellow-priests, to look upon them as friends, to be one with them in sentiment, to consult them in difficulties, to interchange services and hospitality with them?

Clerical concord

On the other hand, how discouraging and disastrous is sacerdotal discord. It paralyzes the sacred ministry. It disedifies the Church of God. Whenever there is disagreement or antipathy between leaders they act at cross purposes; consciously or unconsciously they thwart one another. If a young man is forward and conceited, and puts on a superior air in his dealings with elderly clerics, there is every reason to anticipate that he will sooner or later be tripped up and harassed in the sphere of his activities. *How can we preach the fundamental law of*

[1] *Caritatem imprimis foveant sacerdotes.*—Synod of Maynooth (1900), n. 192.

Christ if we break it in the Sanctuary? How can we diffuse charity in the hearts of the faithful if our own are dry and barren? How can we threaten our brethren with the judgment described in St. Matthew's Gospel if they can cry out to us: "Teachers teach yourselves."[1] "Let us, therefore," says St. Vincent de Paul, writing, in 1645, to eight Vincentians in Ireland, "let us be united by the charity of Christ and God will bless us. . . . How can we draw souls to Christ if we are not united to one another, and to Him? Let us have one mind and one will. Else we shall be like to horses yoked to the same plough who, by pulling one in one direction and another in another, break and destroy everything."[2]

Nothing, perhaps, will conduce to concord and mutual forbearance so much as respect and reverence for our fellow-priests. If self-respect is a duty, much more so is respect for others. If the people hold the priesthood in esteem and veneration, with far greater reason ought we do so ourselves. No familiarity with clerics should ever blind us to their rights—their right to reputation, their right to reverence, their rights as men and as ambassadors of Christ. If we pluck off the divine mantle that dignifies them and lay bare their defects and disfigurements, we shall soon become disrespectful, contemptuous, and even cynical in our attitude. But if we are quick to recognize the good qualities of others and the features that make them

[1] "A priest who, while in open discord with a fellow-priest, attempts to speak of charity to his parishioners, 'n'est plus à leurs yeux qu'*un charlatan*.'"—L'Abbé Dieulin.

[2] *Letters*, vol. i. p. 250.

dear to God, if we consider the zeal and the labours that make them acceptable to the people, we shall become kindlier, and perhaps more humble and more polite.

A habit of sympathetic appreciation will make our intercourse with others sweet and harmonious. Let us cultivate it, and cultivate, too, its outward expression in acts of courtesy and observance. "For one of the best means," says Cardinal Gibbons, "a priest can adopt for preserving peace and concord among his colleagues is to observe the canons of politeness and the rules of exterior decorum," as, on the other hand, one of the most frequent causes of "the *studied reserve and misunderstandings* sometimes noticeable amongst clergymen is their neglect of exterior acts of courtesy towards one another."[1]

One of the best means

Of course in the clerical as in every other human heart there are passions that struggle against the reign of charity. One of these is envy—green-eyed "envy, with jealous leer malign." It is the ugly offspring of disappointed self-conceit. It is ever repining, ever deceitful, ever gnashing its teeth, ever dealing perversely. It would rather see all others kept back than seem itself to lag behind. Like the devils, it would undo the good of others. With evil visage it views the gifts, the success, or the popularity of others, and by slander and meanness, by whisper and insinuation, it strives

Envy

[1] *The Ambassador of Christ.* "Quel que soit le curé à qui l'on vous destine, montrez-vous *toujours respectueux.* . . . Gagnez son amitié par vos manières affables, votre empressement, vos prévenances et surtout par la politesse de vos procédés. *Rien ne resiste à cela, pas même un curè jaloux.*"—*Le Guide du jeune Prêtre.*

to belittle their good repute and their superiority. If a man is very selfish, always seeking his own ease, always anxious for prominence and precedence, always obtrusive, he will, when disappointed, or beaten in the race of life, or thrown into the shade by his fellow-workers, become morose, sour, querulous, and lapse gradually into envious imbecility. We must guard against the surging of this ugly passion, for, from the time of the pharisees even unto the present day, it assumes the specious form of zeal, prudence, or some other virtue. But whatever its disguise, its secret motive is passion and hatred. Christ—the anointed One—may be without sin, may work marvels and attract the people by His divine simplicity, but the envious are shocked at His violations of the Sabbath, at His intercourse with sinners, and at the unwashed hands of His disciples. So they ban Him, undermine Him, humble Him, cross Him, strike Him with their tongues, put wood in His bread, and blot Him out of the land of the living. For our part, if we wish to guard against an envious splenetic disposition, and the treachery it leads to, let us not be conceited or ambitious of the first places ; on the contrary, *let us cultivate the lowly sentiments of Christ,* let us be content with few things, and strive, at least in thought and affection, to familiarize ourselves with humble duties and appointments.

Another source of discord is sectionalism—a tendency to run into grooves and to form groups, "corners," factions. Its horizon is limited by the interests and prejudices of a clique. It is ignorant, narrow, and intolerant. It splits men into discordant elements, creates

Sectionalism

wranglings amongst brethren, and degrades even religion into party contests and petty interests. If armies are united for conquest and destruction, if the children of darkness conspire for earthly motives, shall not those whose aim is the common good work harmoniously together—shall the clergy allow themselves to be disorganized into a spiritless multitude, with various mottoes, standards, and leaders, some crying out, "I follow Paul;" others, "I follow Apollo;" others again, "I am a Jew—I will not speak with Samaritans"? Let us never be drawn into any faction, never divide Christ, never part His seamless robe; let us ignore trifling differences and adopt broad and generous views, remembering that we are *Catholics*, that our sympathies should be conterminous with our religion and should embrace all those on whom God pours His sunshine and His grace. As He wishes all men to be saved and all to form one body in Christ, so we as members of that body should show a care for one another, guarding against disunion, loving one another with the charity of brotherhood, rejoicing if another member has honour, sorrowing if another member suffers.[1]

A third menace to clerical concord is a spirit of censoriousness. It is a characteristic of one who is small-minded and ungenerous. Such a person has a narrow outlook. He never sees more than one side of a question. He is bigoted and intolerant. He has not learned from history or experience the limitations of human nature, the admixture of evil and good to be found

Censoriousness

[1] Rom. xii.; 1 Cor. xii.

in every human being. He expects too much. "He is moved with passion and he mistakes it for zeal." He denies to others the large liberty which he claims for himself. He suspects what is evil, belittles what is good, imputes the worst motives, and passes judgment with a reckless bitterness that is appalling. Those placed in authority are the favourite target of his shafts.[1] He empties many a quiver at them. Why not? "They are over-bearing. They have no sense of justice. They select the worst men for positions of trust. They are proud. They take no counsel. They are the dupes of flattery. They are weak and cowardly. They allow abuses to be rampant. Their rule is a failure. Let another receive it." So thinks and speaks the censorious man, the man with a lynx eye for faults and a blind one for virtues and difficulties, the very man who resents the mildest criticism of himself, who waxes indignant if anyone questions his judgment or his arrangements, and who expatiates with egotism and vehemence on his own wisdom and disinterestedness. Why did such a man enter into the Sanctuary? Was it with a view to promotion? To obtain a rich benefice? To be decorated with honours? To be independent of control? Surely no! Surely he left all to follow Christ, to seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice, to save souls, to be content with little, and to labour in honourable dependence upon episcopal authority. That authority, no matter how able and well directed it may be, is hampered in many ways. It has to take care of all the flock, both

[1] "Necesse est antistitem absurdas reprehensiones sustinere." —St. Chrysostom, *De Sacerdotio*, lib. v. c. iv.

lambs and sheep. It has to balance conflicting views and conflicting interests. All come to the Bishop for guidance, help, encouragement. Complaints pour in from many quarters, yet his lips are sealed. He cannot always send the best men to the best parishes. He must often order them like chosen troops to the front, to the post of danger. But he will not forget them, he will not forget their services. Indeed, his greatest comfort is to know that his priests trust him, that they recognize his difficulties, that they speak their minds to him with frankness, that they are faithful to their ordination promises, honourable in all their dealings, and prompt and cheerful in going wherever the Lord of the harvest calls them.

Questionings

Do you value charity and clerical concord above all things? Do you respect your colleagues and show them some little appreciation?[1] Do you blame little things in others and pass over great things in yourself? In your clerical intercourse do you lack that courtesy in word and deed, in address and salutation, which becomes a gentleman and a priest? Do you strive to win the confidence of your superiors, consulting them in all matters of moment, and cordially co-operating with them in all their plans and undertakings for the advancement of religion?[2] On the contrary, are you squeamish about rights and privileges, suspicious about the motives of others, and

[1] "Our want of sympathy, our scant appreciation, often freezes a young priest, and drives him elsewhere to seek it."—See Canon Keating, p. 103.

[2] "Combien de jeunes gens devenus à 30 ans un sujet de desolation pour l'Eglise et qui eussent été des modèles de sagesse s'ils avaient été sous la discipline d'un prêtre expérimenté!"—Dieulin.

captious on all petty points of jurisdiction? Are you modest in word and act, "swift to hear and slow to dogmatize"—careful neither to put on the tone of an infallibilist nor to obtrude your immature ideas on men of knowledge and experience; or rather do you resemble the Caledonian, described by Lamb, who had no falterings of self-suspicion, upon whom the twilight of dubiety hardly ever fell? Do you gladly allow others to differ from you on a thousand questions of theology, politics, and discipline—in fact on all matters that are not defined or certain? Do you abstain from political wranglings with fellow-priests in public assemblies and in public prints? Nevertheless, are you solicitous to maintain your independence as an individual, not to merge it in party spirit, not to subordinate your views and principles to the preferences or antipathies of others, not to become the mere echo of the cynical or the disgruntled? Do you practise hospitality, and "as far as possible associate at table with your fellow-priests"?[1] Do you pardon trespasses, as Heaven hath pardoned your own, and, before you stand at the altar, do you seek a reconciliation with those whom you have offended? Do you cherish a special affection for the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as the surest way of making your own heart meek, humble, and affectionate?[2]

. . . . . .

Precautions

1. Attend to yourself, mind your own business, think out matters for yourself, so as to have right principles, and do not become the mere shuttle-cock of circumstances.

[1] Fourth Synod of Westminster. [2] Sydney Synod (1885), n. 157.

2. If another neglects his duty, be very slow and very cautious before interfering—*utilius est oculos a rebus displicentibus avertere.*[1] Even if you meet a stone of the sanctuary in the street, an erring brother, be gentle, and thank God for having saved you from temptation.[2]

3. Do not publicly criticize the parochial administration and the conduct of your colleagues, nor encourage fault-finding and opposition. Be honourable and loyal. Keep in check the demon of jealousy, which prompts many to disparage their fellow-labourers, even in the presence of the laity.[3] *Ab obtrectationibus omnino abstineant; nec invidos illos sermones, presertim coram laicis spargant quibus vel leviter fama et existimatio eorum laedatur, qui ejusdem ministerii sunt consortes.*

4. Beware of those priests "who regulate their conduct by lax principles of theology and easy-going casuistry, and who seek themselves and how little they may do for God and His Church without committing grave sin."[4]

5. Observe the following three practices suggested by the Bishop of Newport: first, show at least the negative side of sympathy by abstaining from anything that can hurt the feelings of others; secondly, reduce your self-assertion to the lowest possible figure and strain out of your character all aggressiveness in matters of rights, claims, credit, place, and gratification; and thirdly, try to please others, think what will help or recreate them, and

[1] *Imitation*, bk. iii. chap. xliv.
[2] Third Council of Baltimore, n. 72.
[3] Maynooth Synod (1900), n. 192.
[4] Cardinal Vaughan, *The Young Priest.*

what will promote general cheerfulness. Nothing will as effectually loosen the pack of depression and discouragement on your own shoulders as the very effort to be unselfish and really kind to another.[1]

6. Do all you can to promote clerical union. It is strongly recommended by the reigning Pontiff in his *Exhortatio ad clerum*. It is the desire of his heart to see priests closely bound together in various associations. Such associations, he says, are a safeguard against the dangers of isolation. They make men wise in counsel and strong in action. They come to the aid of individuals who may be confronted with special difficulties. They are a bulwark against the open and insidious attacks of enemies. They advance the interests of sacred learning by stimulating discussion and inquiry. Above all, they keep alive the true spirit and the special virtues of the priesthood by means of prayer, of mutual example, and of combined efforts.

7. Finally, register in your memory the following wise observations of Canon Keating : " I have known good fellows, excellent rectors themselves now, who have lived with and have lived down cross-grained, cantankerous chiefs, in whose eyes nothing was right. I think I divine their secret now. First they resolved not to see that these old men were vain and jealous, close and mean. Verily *there is great virtue in the blind eye*. Then they made up their minds never to defend themselves. Then to see it through, not to appeal to the Bishop, not to ask for a change. The fact is the Bishop knows the state of things as well as the

[1] *Lex Levitarum.*

Curate, and is just about as helpless. . . . I once asked a funny fellow how he lived through a life such as I have described. For answer he said: 'Do you know Campbell Walker's *Correct Card*?' (a book on whist). I nodded assent. 'Then,' he said, 'read again the chapter, *How to treat a bad partner*. It is of no use trying to cure him. I bear with him till the Bishop cuts for a new deal, and meanwhile I play my own hand.'"[1]

. . . . . .

Episcopal visitation

Visitation is appreciated and welcomed by every good priest. It produces a salutary effect upon the people, stimulates works of religion, checks disorders, and strengthens the bonds of union between the chief pastor and his flock. A lax priest, however, has no heart or zeal for a visitation. He deprecates pressure or interference from the outside. He maintains that things are going on in his parish as well as could reasonably be expected, and that the people are "good enough." Abuses, of course, there may be, stagnant waters affecting the atmosphere, but he dislikes any disturbance of them; he dislikes a formal inquiry; he fears the consequences it may have. And no wonder. For a visitation, if rigorously carried out, is a severe test of a good priest, not to say of a negligent one. It is an exact auditing of accounts—of the spiritual and temporal affairs of a parish. It probes wounds, applies remedies, and enforces duties. In the words of the Council of Trent: *Ejus scopus praecipuus est doctrinam sanam . . . inducere, bonos mores tueri, pravos corrigere,*

[1] *The Priest, His Character and Work.*

populum . . . ad religionem . . . accendere et caetera . . . ad fidelium fructum constituere.[1]

Of course there are many other ways besides a visitation in which a Bishop may become acquainted with the state of a particular parish, but generally speaking his knowledge will not be as full as it should be—*multa ignorabit*—unless he goes to the different parts of his diocese, and sees and hears for himself.[2] Hence the Roman *Pontifical* points out in detail what a Bishop on visitation usually does. He begins with all that concerns the Blessed Eucharist—*incipit visitationem a Sanctissima Eucharistia;* he examines the baptistry, the altars, etc.; then he hears confessions and complaints if there are any—*confessiones et deinde querelas, si quae sunt, audit;* and finally he makes some inquiry concerning the conduct of priests and people and concerning the administration of things spiritual and temporal—*de conversatione cleri et populi inquirit.* As a wholesome admonition to young priests it may be well to set forth in a few paragraphs the principal matters that are likely to engage a Bishop's attention.

And inspection

1. The church, its walls, roof, and pavement; the seats, confessionals, stations, and statues; the bells; the holy water stoups; the entrance; the churchyard; the basement.

2. The altars, the altar cloths, the crucifix, the antependia, the candlesticks, the flowers, the predella and its carpet.[3]

[1] Sess. xxiv. c. iii. [2] Benedict XIV, Const. *Ubi primum.*
[3] *Magnopere optamus ut piae illae societates quae ornatum altarium solerter curent in singulis paroeciis sub moderamine parochi erigantur.*—Synod of Maynooth (1900), n. 90.

3. The tabernacle, its veils and interior lining, the lamp before it, the particles—how often made and how often renewed.

4. The sacristy; the vestments; the safe; the sacred vessels; the missals; the holy oils; the purificators, palls, and corporals; the sacrarium.

5. The priests—how they preach, carry out the liturgy, hear confessions, attend the sick, manage schools, direct confraternities, provide Catholic books and papers, and avoid undesirable company.

A Bishop will naturally insist, as far as possible, on the observance of the following points:—

Other points needing episcopal vigilance

That, however sharply a priest may rebuke vice, he shall never directly or insidiously mark out any of the parishioners from the pulpit or altar. Such an act would be, in the language of the Bishops assembled at Baltimore, *audacia intolerabilis*.[1]

That priests shall not enter into civil law-suits, even for the recovery of debts due to the Church, without trying to secure arbitration and consulting the Ordinary.[2]

That the laity shall not bring their clergy into the civil courts, even in purely secular affairs, without first having recourse to the Bishop.

That travelling clerics shall not be allowed to celebrate or administer the Sacraments unless they have commendatory letters from their Ordinary.[3]

[1] Second Council of Baltimore, n. 140; Synod of Maynooth (1900), n. 300.

[2] Third Council of Baltimore, n. 84.

[3] Conc. Trid., Sess. xxiii. cap. xvi. Even when the rector of a church knows that a clerical stranger may be safely allowed to say Mass he can grant permission only for a few days, till the

That nuns or sisters from a community shall not be allowed to go on questing expeditions without certain precautions: amongst others, they shall have the permission of their own Ordinary as well as of the Ordinary of the diocese where they quest, they shall not go singly, they shall be mature in years, they shall not collect after sunset, and, if possible, they shall not lodge anywhere except in religious houses.[1]

That no questing be allowed in a diocese without the *written* permission of the Bishop, or of the Apostolic See.[2]

. . . . . .

Introspection

Can you say with truth, *Domine dilexi decorem domus tuae*? Do you take special care—*summa sollicitudo*—to procure the purest elements for the sacrament of the altar: breads *recently* made from wheaten flour and natural water, and neither so thin nor so small as to render a true *manducatio* impossible, and wine bought from vine-growers of well-known probity, or from firms with intelligence and honesty enough to be able to guarantee what is pure in an age of fraud and adulteration?[3] Are the Eucharistic Species often renewed—once a week, as the *Caeremoniale Episcoporum* and several Decrees of the Congregation of Rites prescribe? Are you careful

Ordinary can be communicated with.—Synod of Maynooth (1900), xxii. 257.

[1] Third Council of Baltimore, n. 95. See also the Decree *Singulari quidem*, of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars (in the admirable *Appendix to Maynooth Statutes*). It gives full directions, *de sororibus stipem quaeritantibus*.

[2] *Monitor. Eccles.*, iv. 1, p. 170.

[3] Second Council of Baltimore, n. 373.

about the candles you use on the altar? Do the two principal ones at Mass contain bees' wax—*saltem in maxima parte*? Do the others used on the altar contain at least a considerable quantity of the prescribed material?[1] Do you examine the tabernacle occasionally, and get it dusted and refreshed? Is it covered with a veil (*conopeum*)? Do you buy cheap vestments, in order that you may not keep old ones too long in use? Do you get the chalices regilt from time to time? Are the holy water fonts *often* cleaned out? Have you all the requisites for the obsequies of the dead? Is not a shabby baptistry, according to Frassinetti,[2] one of the clearest proofs of a rector's indolence and lack of faith? Is yours encumbered with broken statues, faded flowers, and heaps of rubbish? Is the baptismal font properly blessed twice a year—on Holy Saturday and Pentecost Saturday? Is the church thoroughly ventilated and comfortable? Is the sanctuary lamp always burning? *An parasti lucernam Christo tuo?* Are elaborately decorated shrines allowed to distract the people from what is real to what is symbolic, from the living Jesus to lifeless representations? Is electric light used in church, *ita ut modus speciem praeseferat theatricalem*?[3]

Are the approaches to the church in good order, the doors noiseless, the floors regularly swept, and the walls and benches regularly dusted? Do you try to obtain natural flowers as more suitable and less dangerous than artificial ones? Do you take

[1] At least 65 per cent. in one case; at least 25 per cent. in the other. See Maynooth Synod, Appendix xciv.

[2] Part ii. chap. i. [3] Vide Decretum S.C.R., 4, vi., 1895.

care that slates, gutters, and gas pipes are overhauled from time to time? Have you a parochial safe containing registers of baptisms, confirmations, marriages, schools, deaths; also public documents, deeds, etc.?

Acquaint yourself with the privileges and faculties of your Bishop. Endeavour to realize his difficulties and his responsibilities, and give him credit for fair dealing and distributive justice in his administration. Be faithful to the solemn pledge you took on the day of ordination, when, placing your anointed hands in the hands of the ordaining prelate, you *promised reverence and obedience* to your Ordinary.[1] Like Ignatius of Antioch,[2] submit to your Bishop, as Jesus Christ submitted to His Father. Be obedient without servility, respectful without flattery, frank without forwardness. Consult him betimes on questions of serious import that demand his supervision. Respect his mandate and his counsels, and beware of lapsing into a habit of carping criticism. Do not imitate those restless spirits who, in the words of Cardinal Vaughan, "are ever questioning the Church's right and wisdom . . . ever sitting in judgment, ever disputing her authority;"[3] nor belong to the class "who are perpetually asking for a change," perpetually ambitioning the first places in the synagogue.[4] When there seem to be good reasons for a change place them before the Bishop, and gladly abide by

Purposes

[1] *Curre hic vel ibi, non invenies quietem, nisi in humili subjectione sub Praelati regimine.—Imitation,* bk. i. chap. iii.

[2] *Ep. ad Magnes.* [3] Introduction to the *Life of De Rossi.*

[4] *Ex neglectu orationis mentalis "germinavit superbia et contumacia."*—Pius X, *Exhortatio ad clerum,* August 4, 1908.

his decision. Should he, even against your wishes, transfer you from one parish to another, make things as smooth as possible for your successor, and take your departure quietly. Apply yourself at once to the new duties assigned to you, and labour, if need be, in the lowliest offices. Thus will you put in practice the patience and fortitude which make life honourable, and which it will be your duty in pulpit and confessional to inculcate on the people.

BOOKS OF REFERENCE:

Spiritual Perfection: Chapters on Charity. Rodriguez.
Spiritual Conferences: Kindness. Faber.
The Perfection of Man by Charity. Buckler.
Fraternal Charity. Valuy.
Synopsis. Ojetti.
The Law of the Church. Taunton.

CHAPTER IV

Beatus homo cui affluit prudentia.

Priestly prudence

An essential quality in one who undertakes to direct others is prudence, or a capacity to judge wisely, and to act temperately in the varying and often trying circumstances of human life. *Quieto mari recte navem et imperitus dirigit, turbato autem tempestatis fluctibus etiam peritus se nauta confundit.*[1] No great capacity is needed to steer a vessel in a calm sea, but a skilful captain can hardly do so when the tempest rages. No matter how learned or saintly a priest may be he is liable, if inexperienced, to make mistakes in the many delicate situations which arise from time to time in a parish. He is liable to ignore the complexities of human character, to be over hasty, and to pluck up the good grain as well as the worthless cockle.[2] He needs rare practical wisdom to apply properly the general principles of morality. He cannot standardize human beings. He must be able to discriminate between character and character, and in the tribunal of penance as well as elsewhere to make allowance for temperament, training, and environment. *Opus est pastori multa prudentia et sexcentis*

[1] *Reg. Past.*, pt. i. cap. lx. Cf. St. Chrysostom, *De Sacerdotio*, lib. vi. cap. vi.

[2] "Le mieux est souvent l'ennemi du bien."

oculis.[1] Prescriptions that are advisable in one country or period may require modification in other times and places. A method of procedure that is found suitable to one stage of civilization—for instance, a primitive method of finance, or a paternal form of government—may be apt to breed discontent under modern conditions of life. Remember, therefore, says Christ to His Apostles, I am sending you out into the world like sheep among wolves—be wise as serpents, and be on your guard against men.[2]

It may be taken for granted that young men are not inclined to this virtue. It imposes too much of a restraint on their ardour, and requires more deliberation, more caution, and more deference to the riper experience of others than newly emancipated spirits are apt to brook. Nevertheless, young men are usually endowed with certain gifts, such as docility of disposition, singleness of aim, and liberty of spirit, which save them from prejudices and obstinacy, and enable them by degrees to acquire accuracy of observation and soundness of judgment. The chief danger that threatens the growth of priestly prudence is a secular atmosphere. The cold blasts of the world wither up the tender shoots of faith. And if a young priest does not daily withdraw from "the madding crowd's ignoble strife," and purify his thoughts in the crucible of mental prayer—if, on the contrary, he allows himself to be engrossed in social intercourse and external undertakings—his mind, becoming the storehouse of worldly and unchristian principles, will soon exchange the wisdom that is

[1] St. Chrysostom, *De Sacerdotio*, lib. ii. cap. iv.
[2] Matt. x.

from above for the prudence of the flesh.[1] "No man," says Dr Hedley, "whose intelligence is thus defiled can be trusted to trace out a safe and Catholic line of conduct either for himself or his flock He will lean to the natural, undervalue the supernatural, miss the mind of the Church, leave the saints unstudied, criticize persons and institutions, advocate lax views on the one hand, and set up for a reformer on the other." "Neither can such a one be trusted to give sound advice on matters connected with vocation, with mixed marriages, with primary or secondary education, or on any momentous subject in which the spirit of the world is likely to tempt men into dangerous and unchristian courses."[2]

How is Christian prudence to be acquired? How is a priest to "grow in wisdom" and to learn the science of salvation? How will he decide before every important action these three questions—is it lawful? is it becoming? is it expedient?[3] First of all, Christ must be his teacher—Christ as revealed in the Old and the New Testaments. He who follows Christ walks not in darkness. He whose thoughts, judgments, and actions resemble Christ's will be supremely prudent. As à Kempis says: "It is great prudence to know how to hold Jesus fast." Secondly, a priest must hearken to the voice of the Church and study the teachings and examples of Apostolic men. Every chapter of the third part of the *Regula Pastoralis* of St. Gregory the Great tells a pastor how to deal with

How acquired

[1] *Vere prudens est qui omnia terrena arbitratur uti stercora ut Christum lucrifaciat.—Imitation*, bk. i. chap. iii.

[2] *Lex Levitarum.*

[3] St. Bernard, *De Consideratione*, lib. iii. cap. iv.

different classes of people in various stages of virtue or vice. Thirdly, a priest must not despise the discourse of them that are ancient and wise, but when he finds a man of understanding he should go to him early in the morning, and wear away the steps at his door. *Consilium semper a sapiente perquire.*[1] Fourthly, in each important event he should exercise his own mind in deliberation, recalling the lessons and experience of the past, forecasting the contingencies of the future, and thoroughly realizing all the circumstances of the present. History, both local and general, is the portress to the past, foresight partly reveals the onward march of events, and careful observation keeps us in touch with the temper of the times in which we live. Fifthly, he should purify his heart from passions, prejudices, and inordinate attachments, for *sicut nobis res cordi est, sic de ea judicamus: verum judicium propter privatum amorem faciliter perdimus.*[2] Lastly, he should often turn to the Spirit of Truth and ask Him for the gift of prudence in the words of Wisdom or similar ones :—

" God of my Fathers, give me wisdom that sitteth by Thy throne. . . . Send her out of the holy heaven . . . that she may be with me and labour with me . . . that I may know what is acceptable with Thee. For she knoweth and understandeth all things, and shall lead me soberly in my works and shall preserve me by her power. So shall my works be acceptable, and I shall govern the people justly. Hardly do we guess right at things that are upon earth, and with

[1] Eccles. vi., viii., xxxii. [2] *Imitation,* bk. i. chap. xiv.

labour do we find things that are before us. But the things that are in Heaven who shall search out? And who shall know Thy thought except Thou give wisdom and send Thy Holy Spirit from above. And so the ways of them that are upon earth may be corrected and men may learn the things that please Thee."[1]

Diversity of human character

How to know the people of a parish, how to distinguish character from character, how to select suitable remedies for a great variety of maladies—this is the first difficulty that confronts a young priest and that demands from him no ordinary patience and perspicacity. There are so many complexities in human nature, so many differences in temperament, position, and environment, that St. Gregory of Nazianzus may well say, *Ars artium et scientia scientiarum mihi esse videtur hominem regere, animal omnium maxime varium et multiplex.* What a contrast there is in sentiment, inclination, conduct, between men and women, between old and young, between rich and poor! What an interval separates the sick from the healthy, the educated from the vulgar, those who enter the political arena from those who love retirement, those who manfully do their duty from those who faithlessly neglect it! "Man," thus runs the whole passage in St. Gregory, "is so various and uncertain a creature that it requires great skill to manage him. Men's minds differ more than their bodily features and lineaments; and as all meats and medicines are not proper for all bodies, so neither is the same treat-

[1] Wisdom ix.

ment proper for all souls. Some are best moved by words, others by examples; some are of a dull temper and need a spur to stimulate them; others that are brisk and fiery have more need of a curb to restrain them. Praise works best upon some and reproof upon others. Some men are drawn by gentle exhortations to their duty, others must be driven to it by rebukes. And even in the matter of reproof some men are most affected by open rebukes, others are rendered morose and implacable by them; and in fine there are occasions when it is better as it were to wink at faults so that seeing we may not see and hearing we may not hear, lest by too frequent chidings we cause people to despair, and casting off modesty to grow bolder in their sins."

To win the people's confidence

It is the business of a prudent priest to win the confidence of the people and to shun everything that might weaken it; in other words, "to get the key of the heart before trying to effect an entrance at the ear."[1] On his arrival in a parish, he should, on the one hand, avoid all ostentation in his sermons, all striving after too favourable an impression; and on the other, he should be no less sedulous to keep clear of omissions and deficiencies likely to create a prejudice against him from the beginning. The advice which St. Paul gives to Christians to be at peace with all men, to give offence to no one, and always to follow the kindly course with others, is doubly applicable to a priest. His influence depends on the relations that

[1] St. Francis Xavier.

exist between him and the people. If the people have confidence in him all goes well. If, on the contrary, that confidence does not exist, if it has been shattered by imprudence or ill-regulated conduct, his ministrations lose much of their vitality, his penitents desert him, his sermons fall on deaf ears.

Hence a thoughtful priest always remembers that he is a public personage, that his words are noted, his leanings canvassed, his movements discussed. He puts a gate of prudence before his lips; he guards against entanglements; he takes time and counsel before beginning any important work. He studies local colourings and local traditions. He recognizes existing privileges and precedencies. He does not stir up irritation by an excess of zeal.[1] Knowing that the cockle and wheat must grow side by side till the harvest, he is solicitous to reform and not to destroy. Should changes be necessary, he hastens slowly, *feeling his way at every step.*[2] He makes allowance for the diversity of human character and for differences of judgment and of action. He does not advertise himself in the papers, in the pulpit, or in small talk, nor childishly convey the idea that everything was wrong till his fortunate arrival in the parish. He is careful not to alienate or offend any section of the community—a section, for instance, marked off by its business, its nationality, or its politics—and equally careful to treat individuals with respect and consideration. He is

[1] "Les moments de la grace ne sont pas toujours ceux de notre impatience."—St. Vincent de Paul.

"He did not hope for the Republic of Plato. He was content with small advances."—Morley writing of Gladstone.

[2] St. Francis of Sales.

familiar with few and at enmity with none. *Even one family or one person,* says the experienced Berardi, "*who should try to prevent good or cause evil through dislike to a pastor could bring about untold evil in a parish.*" [1]

Anger and avarice

"There are two vices," observes Bishop Moriarty, "which in particular *render priests unpopular* with their parishioners—anger and avarice—as there are two virtues which in particular endear a priest to his flock—meekness and disinterestedness. When the people wish to express to me their satisfaction with their priest, it is invariably because he is a quiet man or because he does not care for money. The reason of their satisfaction is the same in both cases; it is simply because they are not annoyed or aggrieved, because the priest does not hurt their feelings or empty their purses. It is true indeed they will pardon anger when it is united with honesty and generosity of character, but avarice they *never* pardon in life or in death; it is for them as the sin against the Holy Spirit, which will not be forgiven in the present age or in the age to come. Its very offensiveness drives them from their religious duties." [2]

. . . . . .

"Wide was his parish and houses far asunder,
But he ne left nought for ne rain ne thunder,
In sickness and in mischief *to visite*
The ferrest in his parish, moche and lite,
Upon his feet and in his hand a staff." [3]

Every pastor should be able to say with truth,

[1] *Theol. Pas.*, n. 654. [2] *Allocutions.* [3] Chaucer, Prologue to *Tales.*

"I know my flock, and I know them by name"—*cognosco oves meas et voco eas nominatim.*[1] But in ordinary circumstances he cannot say so unless he visits them systematically or makes it his business to meet them on opportune occasions. It is friendly intercourse that breaks down reserve and reticence, and dissipates narrowness and angularity of view. Like the sun's warmth, it makes people unwrap, while aloofness has quite the contrary effect. Why are business people so persistent in sending agents amongst their customers? Why are politicians so solicitous to get in touch with an electorate and to pay each voter the compliment of a visit? Is it not because there is a genial influence in a personal interview for which no substitute can be found? A priest, therefore, must go down amongst his people, study their needs, their interests, their tastes, their tendencies, their *differentia maxime propria,* observe their lives, their thoughts, their language, sympathize with their toils and temptations, and realize their joys and sorrows. By being friendly with all, even with those who are unfriendly, he will guard against the dangers that arise from invidious distinctions. If there are any distinctions, any preferences, they should be shown, not to the wealthy and the attractive, but to the poor and the neglected, to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.[2] A series of small note-books,[3] specially prepared, will enable a priest, more

Systematic visitation of one's flock

[1] Cf. John x.

[2] *Vadit ad illam quae perierat, donec inveniat eam.*—S. Lucae xv.

[3] Such a book as Howell's *Complete Census* is very useful. "The Census-Book published by Benziger if once used will not be easily abandoned."

particularly in populous centres, to keep in mind the names of the various families and of their children, and to draw up, as the Ritual prescribes, a *status animarum*.

There should be nothing stiff or official in the character of his visits, nor should they be made merely for the purpose of admonition. On the contrary, they should be marks of unaffected friendliness; and, when they are such, they will open many a heart to him, they will draw people to their religion and their duty, and they will afford many an opportunity for a tactful word of comfort or of advice that may heal a gaping wound, extinguish an incipient enmity, prevent a lawsuit, or re-establish harmony in a distracted home.

Details of a visit

Certain details connected with a visit deserve attention. There is first the hour. People are embarrassed and far from pleased should a priest drop in on them at an awkward moment, perhaps when the house is in disorder. A little enquiry and observation of local customs will tell him the proper time to call on the different classes in his parish. Consideration for the feelings of others is as urgent in the case of those who are not well off as in the case of those who are. A humble cottage ought not be entered brusquely, unceremoniously, and with hat on, any more than the big mansion of the *nouveau riche*. Affability is the passport in both cases. It dissipates the bashful reserve which often exists on the part of the priest no less than on the part of the parishioners, especially of the younger members. People are glad to welcome one who is simple and natural, at ease with

children, respectful to the old, and interested in the well-being of all the flock. They size up a man's character instinctively. They love him, trust him, repose all their confidences in him, if he is sincere and circumspect; they are little more than outwardly deferential, if they suspect him of being a gossip, a man of policy more than of principle, and an unfaithful custodian of secrets entrusted to his keeping.

However attractive and diversified visiting one's parishioners may seem at first, it is apt to grow wearisome with lapse of years. The monotony of the work, the coldness and rebuffs encountered from time to time, especially in large cities, the disappointing results of many an effort—these things insensibly tell upon a man; only a strong sense of duty and a resolute will can withstand their influence. *Generoso indiget animo ne viribus deficiat neu de errantium salute desperet.*[1] A sense of duty makes a man orderly and methodic, and order and method are essential in parochial visitation. Desultory incursions here and there do little good, and often give rise to censorious comment and jealousies. District by district, family after family—that is the method that will stand the test of time and enable a pastor to show a solicitude for the individual members of his flock and to grow familiar with them in their week-day as well as their Sunday clothes.[2] A few additional points deserve emphasis. A young priest ought to be reserved, epsecially in the beginning.[3]

[1] St. Chrysostom, *De Sacredotio*, lib. ii. cap. iv.
[2] Canon Keating suggests at least two hours a week for visiting. Chap. xiv.
[3] *Familiaritas non expedit.—Imitation*, bk. i. chap. viii.

On his arrival in a parish he is liable to be drawn unthinkingly into relationships which may subsequently turn out to be disagreeable, if not objectionable. Let him bide his time. Let him beware of *entanglements* on the very threshold of his ministry. Let him keep aloof from households and coteries and local divisions, at least till he has taken his bearings. It is easier to advance in friendliness and intimacy than to draw back. "In talking with poor, illiterate, or perhaps degraded people, such as are to be found in large cities, care should be taken not to speak to them in their own modes of thought and language, which they would deem to be an insult, but rather to speak to them kindly, respectfully, and sympathetically, as our fellow-beings." Lastly, a priest visiting his people should not stay too long.[1] A visit, like a sermon, should be short and by no means tedious. A tendency to remain much longer in one house than in another may give rise to gossip and jealousy, if not to scandal.

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Political questions

Saluberrima Patrum Baltimorensium monita de rebus politicis. . . . "Relinquite, fratres venerabiles, mundanis curas et sollicitudines civilium factionum, contentiones potestatis, delusae ambitionis aegritudines. Vide ne ullo pacto res sanctae fidei nostrae ad cujusquam factionis fortunam applicetis."[2]

[1] "What has to be guarded against is the habit of spending long hours in the houses of the laity."—Cardinal Manning, *The Eternal Priesthood.*

[2] Third Council of Baltimore, n. 83.

In other words, join no party or faction. Maintain a respectful but independent attitude towards those who hold the reins of office and authority.[1] Antagonize no section of your people; all belong to a common religious society, though to opposite political camps; all have a title to your love and ministry; all have a right to expect that you will become the enemy of none. If, in local or general politics, you espouse the cause of some individual or advocate the success of some purely political policy, you run considerable risk of stirring up the undying hatred of all those members of your flock whom your partisans endeavour to defeat. As a priest you are a man of peace, an evangelist of charity, a father to contending factions, "one ordained for men in the things that appertain to God,"[2] and, therefore, without retreating to the sanctuary, without abdicating your civil rights, without surrendering your legitimate influence, you should assert your privilege to remain neutral where no vital issues are at stake, you should publicly espouse only those causes, those concerns of the public weal, which rise above the din of party politics, and deeply affect the moral or religious welfare of the people. No one can reasonably deny your right to come forward, even as a minister of religion, in support of sound primary education, of temperance reform, and of all those measures which tend to the amelioration of the toiling classes of society.

[1] "Le clergé ne doit ni se marier avec l'Etat, ni faire divorce avec lui. . . . L'excessive complaisance du clergé pour l'Etat, ne lui a jamais reussi."—L'Abbé Dieulin.

[2] *Pro hominibus constituitur in iis quae sunt ad Deum.*—Heb. v. 1.

The good of religion demands that, as a priest, you should be solicitous as to those who represent your district in Parliament or in local councils. The interests of the poor and the legitimate liberties of the Church often lie at the mercy of such men. Therefore you are free to express your views on the occasion of an election; it may even be your duty to do so; but only under certain restrictions, namely, never within a church, never in the midst of commotion, never in a spirit opposed to Christian charity, always with reasonable deference to your Bishop, so as to obviate clerical dissensions, always with the moderation which is expected from clergymen, and always with a delicate regard for the right that others have to judge for themselves in matters that are doubtful (*relicta unicuique in dubiis libere pro se sentiendi facultate*). On no account should you discuss purely political questions in church.[1]

"The clergyman is a social as well as a religious reformer, a patriot as well as a preacher, and he knows that the permanence of our civic institutions rests on the intelligence and virtue of the people. He has at heart the temporal, as well as the spiritual, prosperity of those committed to his care. They naturally look up to him as guide and teacher. His education experience and sacred character give weight to his words and example. . . . (Indeed) the timely interposition of the minister of peace might help to check many a disastrous popular inundation, by watching its course, and diverting it into a safe channel, before it overspread the country." [2]

[1] Synod of Maynooth (1900), xxviii. n. 392-395.
[2] Cardinal Gibbons, *The Ambassador of Christ*, p. 263.

The clergy are bound to instruct the faithful on the important *duties of citizenship*, to urge them, especially the *sanior pars*, to take a share in public life, and to convince them of the serious obligation of electing worthy and capable representatives.[1] Honourable conduct is not less necessary in public life than in private; quite the contrary. Hence the people ought be warned against bribery, perjury, deceitfulness, and other corrupt practices, as also against measures which would injure religion, Christian education, justice, or charity to the poor. "Experience has shown how important it is that citizens be virtuous and upright . . . what is unlawful in private, is no less so in public."[2] Nevertheless, "a priest should be *very slow* to judge even in his own mind that a vote for or against any given man is sinful. He should be still *slower* to express such a judgment, though prudently formed, and he should be *very slow indeed* to express it in public. This is especially applicable to an absolute, decisive form of pronouncing on the subject. For example, there is considerable difference between saying 'I tell you it is a grievous sin to vote for such a man,' and saying 'It is well for you to reflect whether such a vote may not be sinful;' or, 'If I were to vote for him I should feel that I was guilty of sin.' There are plenty of unmistakable sins, without multiplying them unnecessarily."[3]

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Unwise and excessive zeal is possible in connexion

[1] Synod of Maynooth (1900), n. 395.
[2] Leo XIII, *Longinqua oceani*.
[3] Dr. O'Reilly, S.J., *Church and State*.

with the question of primary schools, especially those in the United States. Hence the Third Synod of Baltimore[1] warns pastors to be guided by the counsels and precepts of the Holy See, and not to threaten, or treat as unworthy of the Sacraments, those Catholics who send their children to public schools, under circumstances approved of by their Ordinary. Moreover, a priest should be careful "not to attack the public or government schools of a country which may be, as in the United States, excellent in all the departments of secular knowledge."[2] It is of course permissible for him to insist often on the religious education of Catholic children, and to prove that public schools do not give as complete and comprehensive an education as Catholics deem essential for the well-being of society.

Parochial schools

In case you are appointed to some public institution—for example, a hospital, a prison or a penitentiary—you will be well advised to study its rights and privileges, its rules and traditions, not to infringe them even through religious zeal, to be scrupulously exact and punctual in your official duties, to win your way by courtesy and gentleness, and to guard against the mere appearance of proselytism, by never interfering with non-Catholics, except when they explicitly request your ministry. See an excellent chapter on this subject in Canon Keating's book, *The Priest, His Character and Work.*

Chaplain to public institutions

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A good priest will not be indifferent to the per-

[1] N. 198. [2] Stang, *Pastoral Theology.*

fection of his people. He will preach the evangelic counsels as well as the evangelic precepts. He will say with St. Paul: "Be zealous for the better gifts. I show you a more excellent way. . . . I say to you who are unmarried, it is good for you if you so continue even as I. . . . The unmarried woman and the virgin thinketh on the things of the Lord that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she that is married thinketh on the things of the world how she may please her husband." Virginity is a holier state than matrimony, and in any way to depreciate it would be to go against the spirit of Christ and the express teaching of the Catholic Church. Virgins follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. They leave all. They give an example of the noblest detachment. As a rule they enter into religion; and there they live purely, fall rarely, rise speedily, spend their days in peace, and die in security.

Vocations to the religious life

Comparatively few Christians, indeed, are called to the religious life—few are fit for it—and therefore the first symptoms of a true vocation, the whisperings of conscience, should be carefully observed and fostered. It is a gross injustice, anathematized by the Church, to hinder virgins without just cause from taking the vows of religion;[1] just as on the other hand it is an act of no ordinary merit to encourage all those who experience a decided attraction to a life of perfection. If there were no religious communities what would become of the

[1] Council of Trent, Sess. xxv. c. xviii.

surpassing sanctity of the Church, who would give an example of chastity to the young of both sexes, who would bring our little ones to the feet of Jesus, who would afford a haven of rest to the victims of human vice, who would devote themselves with purest charity to the service of the sick and the poor, who would pour out unceasing intercession with sinless hands for a sinful world, who would help the clergy to spread the faith, who in a word would be free from domestic ties to give themselves wholly to the interests of God ? " When we think of all the benefits that accrue to the Christian community from the devotion of saintly sisterhoods, we bend the knee in gratitude to the Almighty." [1]

Dealings with religious communities

" It happens sometimes that the relations between nuns and the mission clergy are not as harmonious as might be desired. . . . This may be the result of a bad tradition . . . or it may arise from a little jealousy of ' one of our Fathers ' who is coming for confession next week. Is there not on our part sometimes a want of interest in their confessions and of sympathy with their work that would account for this preference for other Fathers ? The fact is that both we and the nuns are quite capable of being a little narrow, and of seeing only one side of the bargain. It is, of course, quite true that they are sometimes unreasonable in their demands, and do not sufficiently consider the priest and the limitations that other work puts upon him. They ask for Mass at an intolerably early hour, because Reverend

[1] Second Council of Baltimore, n. 415.

Mother must have breakfast before the sun rises. It is nothing to them that the priest is kept in his confessional till eleven at night, while they are in the first sleep by nine. . . . On the other hand we are often grudging and wanting in consideration towards them. We make needless difficulties over a confession day for Reverend Mother's Feast. We refuse them an additional benediction, forgetting that it is their all here. In a word, we make them very much what they are. . . . And I sometimes feel that they do not get from us as much consideration as if they were the workhouse officials who paid us." [1]

Hence " we must remember," says Canon Oakley, " that religious communities have their rights and their traditions as well as ourselves, and that the way most likely to secure us against inconvenience from the overstrained enforcement of these rights will be found in the spirit of pliancy and accommodation with which we exercise our own." [2]

" Il y a peu de milieu chez la femme ; la tendresse et l'antipathie sont deux points extrêmes dont la distance est facilement franchie, même en religion, notez cela. Lorsqu'on veut se venger du curé on essaye quelquefois de piquer son amour propre en traitant le vicaire avec toutes sortes de fines attentions, etc. Sur ce terrain les femmes, et surtout les religieuses, jouent merveilleusement leur rôle de victimes ; et je ne sais pas s'il y a un moyen devant lequel elles reculent pour assurer leur triomphe.

[1] Canon Keating, *The Priest, His Character and Work.* The Second Council of Baltimore, n. 415, and the Synod of Maynooth (1900), n. 363, emphasize the *merita praeclara,* the *fructus eximios* derived by Christian society from religious institutes of women.

[2] *The Priest on the Mission.*

(*a*) Votre première resolution doit être *de ne point ingerer dans les affaires interieures des religieuses.* (*b*) Un prêtre ne doit pas frequenter, sans une juste nécessité, les maisons des religieuses, y manger, y séjourner longtemps. *Qu'il évite* les colloques qu' elles recherchent et *toute espèce de familiarité.* Ces filles ont certainement de la vertu, mais après tout elles conservent un cœur de femme.[1] (*c*) Avant tout, soyez poli, toujours poli ; soyez prudents, soyez circomspects, ne faites rien à la hâte, prenez conseil. . . . Si vous manquez de tact et d'energie dans les commencements, vous ouvrez une brêche difficile ensuite à fermer. (*d*) Lorsque des querelles surviennent, le curé doit bien interroger sa conscience et voir si il n'a point dépassé la juste limite de ses attributions." [2]

BOOKS OF REFERENCE:

Regula Pastoralis. St. Gregory.
Guide Canonique des Institus à Vœux simples. Battandier.

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[1] *Sedulo curent ordinarii ut regula aliqua bene ordinata de visitationibus otiosis . . . ad monasterium accedentium statuatur.*—Synod of Maynooth (1900), xxvii. 372.

[2] L'Abbé Reaume, *Le Guide du jeune Prêtre.*

CHAPTER V

Instruite in spiritu lenitatis considerans teipsum.

In all dealings with the people, in the pulpit, in the confessional, it becomes a priest to be gentle and patient with everyone. *Congregationi pauperum affabilem se faciat.*[1] If he does his works in meekness he will possess the land, and be beloved beyond the glory of men.[2] But if, as St. Vincent de Paul remarks, he is not gentle with the people, especially with the poor, they will think him too austere or too grand for them, and they will not dare to approach him. Christ came as a Lamb—the bruised reed He did not break, the smouldering wick He did not quench, the woman taken in sin He did not condemn, the last lingering link of some Magdalen with her Creator He was careful not to snap asunder. Like the good Samaritan He bound up our wounds and soothed them with oil and wine; like a kind Father He came to meet the returning prodigal, like a servant He washed the feet of His disciples. And surely if the King cometh meek,[3] it would ill become His ministers to be harsh and stern, to put on gloomy looks, and administer smart doses of vinegar. If God made Man is humble and patient, God's ministers

Gentleness especially in correction

[1] Eccles. iv. [2] Eccles. iii. [3] Isaias ii.

cannot be haughty and dictatorial. If the master of the household has patience with his servant and forgives him a debt of six million pounds, surely the pardoned suppliant will not seize a fellow-servant by the throat and proceed to strangle him for a paltry debt of ten. The anger of man worketh not the righteousness of God; it commands when it should entreat, it offends when it should attract. The Pharisees with their broad phylacteries, their public fasts, and their prolonged prayers, blamed Christ, blamed the disciples, and blamed the people. They had no pity for publicans and sinners. Yet they were mere whitened sepulchres. Not so the Saints. They were harsh only to themselves. They instructed others, even sinners, in a spirit of mildness, *in spiritu lenitatis*;[1] when they found an evil-doer, some one taken in sin, they did not cast the first stone, but lovingly spent themselves and laid down their very lives for the foolish prodigal.[2]

But though considerate and kind, the true pastor is also vigilant. Though tender as a mother, he is also firm as a father. He is appointed to pluck up as well as to plant. What was broken he has to bind by the bond of discipline—what is fallen away he has to bring back by pastoral vigour. *Servanda itaque est et in corde humilitas et in opere disciplina.*[3] Even at the very time that a pastor is on the alert against evil-doers, no pharisaic pride must enter his heart. St. Paul, prepared though he was to face the Corinthians with a rod of punishment—*in virga*

[1] Gal. vi.

[2] *Melius est Domino rationem reddere de nimia misericordia quam de nimia severitate.*—St. Chrysostom.

[3] Read *Regula Pastoralis*, pt. ii. cap. vi.

veniam ad vos?—yet styles himself not their superior or their equal, but their "servant through Christ." And St. Gregory adds that for the most part we should give precedence in our silent thoughts to the very people whom it is our duty to correct.

Manifold are the dangers which threaten the Christian fold, and which it is the duty of a pastor not only to correct but even to anticipate. They vary very much with the environment—with the country and with the locality. But in general they are infidel or immoral books, papers, pictures, and plays, dangerous schools, evil companions, seductive amusements, immodest dances,[1] drinking "saloons," gambling clubs, the neglect or violation of the Lord's Day, abstention from Mass, neglect of children, ignorance of Christian Doctrine, discord in Catholic circles and societies. It may become the pastor's duty at times to give advice or even admonition to some individuals or to his entire congregation; but experience will teach him, as it taught St. Bernard, that it is always better to remain silent than by correction to give offence and perhaps provoke opposition. *Vulnera immature secta deterius infervescunt.*[2] Rarely indeed can a priest successfully remove a mote from a brother's eye till he has first taken the beam out of his own.[3] Unless he is himself without reproach he is not free to rebuke his subjects.[4] Moreover, he must be *slow to believe* and *still slower to report* what is evil of others. Charity hopeth all

[1] *Quae quotidie magis magisque frequentantur*,—Second Council of Baltimore, n. 472.
[2] *Reg. Past.*, pt. ii. cap. x. [3] Luke vi.
[4] St. Chrysostom, *De Sacerdotio*, chap. v.

things, and lendeth not her ear to tale-bearers and scandal-mongers. If fraternal admonition becomes necessary, the sad consequences of sin, temporal no less than spiritual (the unhappiness, for instance, as well as sinfulness of many a mixed marriage), should be clearly pointed out, and in a manner so kindly and tactful as to disarm resentment. Faults should be extenuated and redeeming features readily recognized. *Ipsa reprehensio commiserationem ostendat.*[1] Scolding is altogether reprehensible. "It is the resonance of the empty intelligence and of the empty heart. *It has driven innumerable souls into the bonds of sin.*"[2]

In the interview at Jacob's Well we may discern an instance of the divine art of admonishing and converting erring souls. Jesus, travel-stained and thirsty, is seated towards evening, "about the sixth hour," at the meeting of several roads. A simple Samaritan woman approaches, carrying a pitcher to fetch water. With a friendliness unusual between the Samaritans and their hostile neighbours Jesus asks her to give Him some to drink, and tells her of the Living Water that welleth up into eternal life. Her heart is touched. She acknowledges her sinful life. Then the Messiah reveals Himself to her, teaches her, an alien and a sinner though she is, the sublime doctrine of true interior worship, and, turning aside from His journey, lingers two whole days with her fellow-citizens of Sichem. From this and other instances in the life of the great Teacher learn, while you are still young, to be meek and humble;

[1] St. Francis Borgia. [2] Hedley, *Lex Levitarum.*

learn to have compassion on those who err; learn how to give corrections in a spirit of mildness, "for young priests, like young people in every walk of life, civil and political—like young officers, young administrators, young schoolmasters—are wont to be more severe than those who are more experienced—*soyez surs qu'ils seront plus sévères que les anciens.*" [1]

"By all thy nature's weakness
Hidden faults and follies known,
Be thou in rebuking evil
Conscious of thy own." [2]

[1] "C'est moins la vérité qui blesse que *la manière de la dire.*"—Dieulin.
[2] Whittier.

CHAPTER VI

Urbanitas et suavitas morum ministros Dei hominibus acceptos reddunt.

Some of the qualities which should regulate social intercourse are summed up by such expressions as "good manners," "courtesy," "politeness," "tact," or by the one word "gentleman." It will be interesting, therefore, to observe what a large group of virtues are interwoven with the character of a true gentleman; such as candour, modesty, self-restraint, justice, charity, prudence, and others less familiarly known. Take the elementary duty of respect for the rights of others. It tells us to be tolerant, to allow them liberty of opinion, not to harbour or express feelings of contempt for them. Again, what is charity but a high estimate of others, as kinsmen of God, and a sincere desire for their happiness? This queen of virtues shuns everything that gives pain or offence. "It is patient, it is kind, it envies not, it dealeth not perversely, it is not puffed up, it is not ambitious, it seeketh not its own." It is candid, modest, unselfish. The courtesy thus outlined by charity is not less forcibly prescribed by prudence. No man can influence or govern others who offends their tastes and susceptibilities.

"Manners makyth man"

"What thou wilt,
Thou rather shalt enforce it with thy smile,
Than hew t' it with thy sword."

It would " be a mistake to imagine that men are always guided by reason. They are strange, inconsistent creatures, and act quite as often, perhaps *oftener, from prejudice and passion.*" In nothing perhaps have men stronger likes and dislikes than in the matter of manners. They pay homage to " good form," they give power and precedence to those who are refined and amiable ; on the other hand they detest what is harsh and unseemly, even in the features of virtue, they resent every infraction of the usages of polite society, they inflict censures on a contumacious delinquent, place him under interdict or excommunication. And no wonder. The man who defies the rules of social intercourse, who ignores the feelings of others, who makes no effort to prune away whatever causes annoyance—such a one, no matter what he professes or preaches, is regarded as selfish or obstinate, and as little worthy of the respect or privileges of society.

A priest, therefore, who comes forward into the public forum as an ambassador, and who hopes to attract the busy multitude to the service of Christ, must strive to correct " faults of manner, demeanour, and pronunciation, on which it is hardly too much to say the casual judgments of the world are formed, and which *tell against men* to a degree altogether disproportioned to their real importance."[1] He must strive to acquire that delicacy of feeling, that tact and courtesy, which are his best recommendation to others, and which often exercise a more vital and lasting influence than the more pretentious gifts of

[1] Lecky, *Map of Life.*

learning and eloquence. He must strive not merely to be a good priest, but also to be agreeable and gracious to all whom he wishes to gain or to convince.[1]

"The charities that soothe and heal and bless
Are scattered at the feet of man, like flowers."

Let us, therefore, ask ourselves: Have we respect for the rights of others? Do we suspect and judge them rashly, even maliciously? Do we hastily credit, unjustly exaggerate, and unscrupulously spread abroad unfavourable reports about them? Have we a desire to please our companions and neighbours—or at least a desire not to irritate and offend them? Do we neglect the proprieties and conventions of social intercourse? Do we look upon impoliteness and vulgarity as synonyms for selfishness and ignorance? Are we respectful to age and poverty? Do we salute our parishioners, even before they salute us?[2] Are we straightforward and truthful? Do we avoid bashfulness as diligently as forwardness? Are we modest without being obsequious? Do we strive to apply to the thousand trifles that make up life the gospel of kindliness and self-denial, which we preach in the pulpit? On the contrary, are we cold, taciturn, reserved, disdainful, inclined to hedge ourselves round with a sort of *professional stand-offishness*? Have we reflected how, and where, we are to acquire tact and refinement of manner? Is it in one's home, in college, or in social intercourse?

[1] "Que de fois j'ai entendu dire: C'est un excellent homme, un bon prêtre, mais que ne sait-il vivre! Que n'apprend-il â se tenir et à parler d'une manière civile et polie."—L'Abbé Reaume, *Le Guide du jeune Prêtre*.

[2] Valuy.

Certainly the home, the Christian home, with its love, reverence, and piety, is "the true school of all that is best," drawing forth man's nobler feelings and whatever is highest in his nature. "Seminary life, on the contrary, does not always ensure affability and gentleness." At least so thought Cardinal Vaughan. But there is no reason why the games, the amusements, the frictions, and the intercourse of college life should not develop and strengthen in students, as indeed they often do, consideration for others, self-restraint, frankness, and friendliness. It is, however, from contact with good society that we must hope for the best results. Such contact is invaluable in teaching a certain exterior politeness, in removing asperities of manner, and in fostering those qualities which are essentially of the nature of tact.

How acquired

As a beautiful elucidation of what we have been endeavouring to put into words we give some extracts from Newman's definition of a gentleman: "He is *one who never inflicts pain*. . . . He carefully avoids all clashing of opinion or collision of feeling, all restraint or suspicion or gloom or resentment, his great concern being to make everyone at home and at ease. . . . He recollects to whom he is speaking; he guards against unreasonable allusions or topics that may irritate; he is seldom prominent in conversation and never wearisome. . . . He never defends himself by a mere retort; he has no ears for slander or gossip, is *scrupulous in imputing motives* to those who interfere with him, and interprets everything for the best. He is *never mean* or bitter in his

Newman's definition of a gentleman

disputes, never takes an unfair advantage, never mistakes *personalities* or sharp sayings for arguments, or insinuates evil which he dare not say out. . . . Nowhere shall we find greater candour, consideration, indulgence. He throws himself into the minds of his opponents, he accounts for their mistakes."[1]

From all that has been said it is clear that habits of tact and courtesy can only be acquired by the admirable art of self-repression—in other words, by the Christian virtue of self-abnegation. We cannot be just or kind, prudent or truthful, without vanquishing ourselves in many of the daily details of conduct. We cannot subjugate even so small a member as the unquiet tongue—*malum inquietum*—without taking up our cross many and many a time. By fidelity in small things, by often surrendering our own ease, tastes, and inclinations, by a sincere desire to serve and oblige others, especially those from whom no return can be expected, we may daily advance in that mortification which is essential for eternal life, and in that charity which is the fulfilment of the whole law of Christian perfection.

"Melt down thy gold and silver and make a balance for thy words and a just bridle for thy tongue." Observe: a just bridle for thy tongue. Conversation is a pleasant interchange of ideas, and therefore steers mid-way between the extremes of loquaciousness and taciturnity. Those, says Cowper, who do not keep up the proper conversation of human beings may be considered as imitating the language of

A balance for thy words

[1] "Good manners hardly have a single master-key unless it be simplicity or freedom from the curse of affectation."—John Morley.

different animals, as prating like parrots, repeating the same note like cuckoos, grunting like hogs, snarling like curs, complaining like owls, hissing like serpents, pricking up their ears at their own braying like donkeys. A manly character is careful to purge from his speech whatever is deceitful,[1] offensive, or unfit. He shuns flattery and servility on the one hand, and bluntness and pertness on the other. He discourages censoriousness, *befriends the absent*, sides with the weak, repudiates what is improper,[2] detests subterfuges and equivocations, neither wrangles nor dogmatizes, and always "speaks though sure with seeming diffidence."

"Speak gently: 'tis a little thing": gently, yet distinctly, neither in a loud voice, as if you were a town crier, nor in a whisper, as if you distrusted some one. "*A voice sounding above others*," remarks St. Bonaventure, "is one of the most *unendurable* things in conversation." Equally unendurable are careless articulation and vulgar pronunciation. If we may believe Ruskin, "a false accent or a mistaken syllable is enough in the parliament of any civilized nation to assign to a man a certain degree of inferior standing." A young man will do well to attend to the following additional cautions: not to jibe at others and hold them up to ridicule,[3] not to make grotesque efforts at mimicry, not to indulge in foreign phrases and finical expressions, not to weary listeners with one's grievances, ailments, or

[1] *Non ambulans in astutia.*—2 Cor. iv.

[2] *Clericus verbis turpibus jocularis ab officio removendus.*—Fourth Council of Carthage, c. 60.

[3] "C'est une des plus mauvais conditions qu'un esprit puisse avoir que d'être moqueur."—St. Francis of Sales.

achievements,[1] and not to introduce topics, such as politics, likely to cause unpleasantness; but on the contrary to cultivate a natural, unaffected, cheerful, kindly manner in one's words and intercourse with others. "If any man offend not in word the same is a perfect man."

Not only in conversation, but in all the daily incidents of social intercourse, a gentleman manifests delicate consideration for the views and feelings of others. His great concern is to put them at their ease and to "avoid whatever may cause a jar or a jolt in their minds." Hence he is faithful to his engagements and his promises; he is *punctual*; he does not keep people waiting for him, not even servants and inferiors; he does not bore people with frequent or protracted visits; he is not aggressive in argument; he does not harass the enjoyment of others—for example, by interruptions and loud talk at a concert or musical performance; he shows appreciation for the efforts, if not the success, of others; he does not stare, nor wrench his eyes sideways, nor roll them about inquisitively; "he does not loll and sprawl, in public or in private;" he does not carry his umbrella or stick awkwardly, especially in a street; he avoids a whole *catalogue of vulgarities* enumerated by St. Bonaventure, such as making a hissing sound at the divine office and other prayers, expectorating, loud coughing, yawning, sighing aloud, gurgling, sniffing, and a hundred and one petty things at table, at visits, in public or in private, which, by their very nature, or by

Consideration for others

[1] "It is your duty when you go into society to think and talk of yourselves as little as possible."—M. F. Egan.

rigid convention, are branded as disagreeable and even offensive. In his book on the priesthood, St. Chrysostom notices the undue significance attached to salutations by people of the world: "They observe one's looks, the tone of the voice, the motion of the eyes, the style of the laughter—the very least of one's actions. He smiled blandly, they say, to such a one, and saluted him with a bright countenance and a cheery voice, but, as for me, he treated me with little deference and quite formally. And when conversing with people if you do not cast your eyes all around, they say you are offensive. . . . (Nevertheless) it is one's duty to bear up bravely against the discouragement that arises from such annoying observations."

The dress and outward bearing of a priest should correspond with his serious and sacred character.

The exterior

Nil nisi moderatum prae se ferat.[1] Therefore two extremes must be avoided—what is slovenly, soiled, or careless on one side, and what is over-nice and affected on the other. *Elegantiores et mundanae formae vestium,* the newest fashions in dress, showy ornaments, hair cultivated with feminine solicitude, such things are as much out of harmony with the simple propriety of the priesthood as are ill-made, baggy garments, soiled linen, neglected hands and nails, unkempt hair, and unclean, malodorous teeth. If a priest is foppish people regard him as vain, if he is slovenly they look upon him as unsocial and unreliable, if he is uncouth or peculiar in his dress and bearing they

[1] Council of Trent, *De Reformatione.*

ridicule him and lose respect for him.[1] "Americans," says Dr. Talbot Smith, "have an eye for the exterior man, and demand a *high standard in dress and manners from their clergy.*"

"We order clerics," so runs a decree of the Synod of Baltimore, "when at home or in the church to wear a soutane, and when in public intercourse with the world to wear such a dress as will by its length and dark colour distinguish them from the laity. We strictly order them also to wear the Roman collar at home and abroad, inside and outside their dioceses. The proper priestly dress wins respect for those who wear it, and, by keeping them in mind of the dignity of their calling, cuts them off from many things that would ill become them." [2]

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A Gentleman. M. F. Egan.
Le Guide du jeune Prêtre. Reaume.
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[1] "Carelessness in dress will prejudice people against you as completely as a badly written letter."—M. F. Egan,

"C'est *un mépris* de ceux avec lesquels on converse d'aller parmi eux en habit désagréable."—St. Francis of Sales, Introduction, c. 25.

[2] Third Council of Baltimore, n. 77.

[3] "Have in your library one or two books which treat of the rules of manners, and look through them occasionally."—Valuy.

CHAPTER VII

Non habemus pontificem qui non possit compati infirmitatibus nostris.

SYMPATHY with others must be one of the leading characteristics of a priest.[1] Christ has said so by word and example. He wishes His followers to be one, as He and the Father are one. He wishes them to be members of one another—one body and one spirit—compacted together by a community of sentiment, of interests, and of life. He wishes them to be recognized on earth and judged in Heaven by their mutual sympathy, kindness, and forbearance. In His own life He gave a charming pattern of what He inculcated—He had compassion on the multitude, went amongst them doing good, and when asked for a proof of His authority, appealed to His services to the poor and the afflicted.[2] He did not assume lordship over men, but came as one who serveth. He became like the people in all things, excepting sin. He spoke with them, mixed freely with them, ate at the same table with them, shared in their toil, joined in their feasts, mourned in their sorrow, pitied them in their losses, cured them in their ailments, helped them to bear their burthens; and as many

Sympathy with others

[1] "I think we priests have certain special temptations to be cold-hearted."—Oakley, *The Priest on the Mission.*

[2] Matt. ix.

as received Him He gave them power to become the sons of God. So, too, is it with a priest. His life, his labours, his thoughts, his affections belong to the people. He puts off self-seeking—*seipsum exinanivit*—he cultivates a solicitude for others, opens his eyes to their trials and their wants, shares their joys and sorrows, and nourishes in his heart a fellow-feeling for the least of Christ's brethren. But no mere natural sentiment will suffice, no mere principle of philanthropy, to keep his sympathy true and constant. It must rest on a broader foundation—on the supernatural foundation of Divine Charity, which transcends the barriers of race and creed, and makes itself all things to all men.[1] The practical question presents itself: What are the signs and evidences of this blessed gift of sympathy?

Its expression

1. Rich and poor value a true and sympathetic friend who respects them, visits them, shows an interest in them and their families, counsels them in their difficulties, does not backbite them, and carefully guards the secrets entrusted to him. On the other hand, says Cardinal Vaughan, "there are good priests who are *repulsive* and detestable simply because they show no sympathy or interest in their people, especially those who are poor, ignorant, ill-mannered, or otherwise unattractive."[2]

2. Accommodating the words of St. Paul, we may say that the spiritual body does not come first, but that which is animal is first, then that which is spiritual. Poor people must be first humanized,

[1] 1 Cor. ix. "O ye pastors," says Fénelon, "put away all *narrowness of heart.*"

[2] *The Young Priest.*

then spiritualized. A clean and healthful environment tends to produce a temperate life, just as squalid surroundings are apt to debase and demoralize. Hence it is the business of the priest not to confine himself to the Sanctuary, but "by every means in his power to try to secure the good of the people." "*Worthy of all praise,*" says Leo XIII, "*is he who takes up the cause of the working-man,* strives to better his condition, infuses a spirit of equity into the mutual relations of employers and employed, and keeps before the eyes of both classes the precepts of duty and the laws of the Gospel." Such a one, above all if he is a priest, having a disinterested solicitude for the poor, will be welcomed in their midst. He will save them from the false principles and delusive promises of unchristian socialism. He will encourage associations amongst Catholics. He will point out the elemental causes in human nature—greed, envy, pride, improvidence[1]—from which economic troubles spring. He will strain every resource, both human and divine, to safeguard the peace, purity, independence, and mutual duties which constitute domestic life. He will strive to protect the poor from corrupt influences. He will teach all his people, in practice and in theory, the supreme importance of eternal life.

3. Do you imagine the multitude understand abstract theories, true or false? Are they not captivated by hopes, by promises, by kindness, and by

[1] "Christian morality restrains man's greed for money and thirst for pleasures, *two plagues* which often cause misery in the midst of abundance. . . . Without providence, self-control, endurance, and other natural virtues, you may try your hardest, but prosperity you cannot provide."—Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum* and *Graves de Communi.*

leaders who are earnest and good-tempered? Do they not reasonably expect from Christianity practical results in this life as well as in the next? How can you gain their hearts except by a more excellent way, by a faith which rests in God, a hope that takes in earth as well as Heaven, and a charity that is such not in thought and word only, but in deed and in truth? Do you condemn reformers, while not even with your little finger do you alleviate the burthens of the poor? Before launching out into any denunciation of socialism, do you accurately discriminate the points in which it certainly conflicts with Catholic doctrine from those in which it merely departs from traditional usage and sentiment? Do you speak without respect and without affection to the needy and the lowly? Do you return their salutes? Do you expect the finer feelings of gratitude from those who have been soured and demeaned by the pinch of poverty? Do you strive to lessen intemperance and selfishness, and to inculcate such natural virtues as justice, charity, and thrift? Do you by lectures, libraries, and the diffusion of good papers and wholesome literature, cultivate amongst your people a vigorous, independent, loyal type of character as staunch to truth as early Christianity amidst paganism, or as Irish Catholicism amidst the rigours of the penal code? Do you labour in private and in public, as a man, a citizen, and a priest, to diminish the gross inequalities that divide the toiler from the idle and the wealthy? Do you study the social question in the Encyclicals of Leo XIII, and in trustworthy authors? Do you "give favourable consideration to whatever appears con-

ducive to the well-being of those who work," to every measure and every association likely to ameliorate their condition? Do you keep in touch with respectable employers and business houses, and with all agencies of local beneficence, so that it may be in your power to do a kind turn in the hour of need?

4. A hundred little acts of kindness lie within the reach of a thoughtful, sympathetic priest, trifling deeds of courtesy, which are often *more welcome than elaborate philanthropy,* often more far-reaching in their effect than golden gifts bestowed with pride.[1] A sick person got into a hospital, a child saved from danger, Masses and other sacred functions arranged for the convenience of the poor, a friendly visit paid to those in sorrow, a case of sudden destitution discovered,[2] a letter of condolence written, a word of advice or encouragement spoken, a recommendation forwarded, a call promptly answered, a kindly inquiry made, a poor man's request quickly attended to,[3]—these and such like lesser charities may often give scope to the benevolence of a priest. Even a cup of cold water given in the name of Christ will not be without a blessing and a reward.

5. Pecuniary help of the poor is not to any considerable extent within the power of a priest; but even if his resources were less limited than they generally are it is a matter for consideration how far and under what circumstances such help is advisable. A shilling dropped here or there, says Canon Keating,

[1] Mark xii. 41-44.

[2] *Videndus est ille qui te non videt; requirendus ille qui erubescit videri.*—St. Ambrose, *De Officiis,* lib. ii. cap. xvi. n. 77.

[3] "The poorest man ought to have no fear of coming to a priest—for a priest belongs to his flock."—Cardinal Manning, *The Eternal Priesthood.*

gets rid of importunate beggars indeed, but, instead of helping, oftentimes only degrades them.[1] A system of tickets for groceries and other necessaries possesses many advantages, especially when the tickets are distributed by an intelligent, painstaking committee, such as a branch of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. *Contact between rich and poor*, between the leisured classes and the toilers, is more necessary to-day than ever. It brings about mutual understanding and mutual respect, and helps to break down social inequalities and antipathies, to raise up the lowly valleys and to level down the hills and mountains. What rankles in human hearts and burns them with bitterness is the contemptuous pride of certain classes of society rather even than their rank or wealth. But whatever means may be found most advisable to alleviate occasional distress, it ought to be always the aim of charity to *renovate character* as far as possible, and to encourage industry and thrift. Indiscriminate almsgiving ought to be avoided. It is often unconsciously the prop of idleness, drunkenness, and hypocrisy. The naked wretchedness of those who try every expedient to awaken sympathy ought not to blind us to the superior claims of the deserving poor who struggle to make ends meet and to keep up appearances. Whatever assistance we render to others ought not be altogether fixed and unchangeable—otherwise the recipients will come in time to calculate upon it as a certainty and even a right.

[1] "Almsgiving of the money kind should rather be our last than our first resource in the relief of the poor."—Canon Keating, *The Priest, His Character and Work.*

6. Moreover, what a priest cannot do himself he can often more effectually accomplish through others. Like the Apostles, he can influence men of wealth and culture, of prominence and reputation, to help the poor. He can awaken a proper public feeling. Like the penniless Vincent de Paul, he can become an agent and an apostle of charity. Like Ozanam, he can encourage and organize charitable associations. He can touch the rich with the sufferings of the poor, urge the claims of equity on the employers of labour, and enlist those who have time and talent in the service of those who have neither. *This is the age of the lay apostolate.* "Active laymen," says Archbishop Ireland, "are particularly needed in the Church to-day." "There is, on the part of laymen, too much dependence upon priests. If priests work, they imagine that they themselves may rest. In Protestantism the layman is more keenly alive to his responsibility."[1] Priests, therefore, should stimu late among Catholics an *energetic public spirit,* "of which there is a woeful lack," and urge the well-to-do to take an abiding interest in national politics, to act justly and honourably in their civic as in their private capacity, and not to expect their clergy to initiate and conduct everything. There are many works and undertakings, societies and reunions, which by no means necessitate the presence of the priest. Indeed, if a priest, says Canon Keating, "studies how many committees he can escape rather than how many he can serve on, he will probably save more souls and the committees will not suffer."

[1] *The Church and Modern Society*, p. 81.

7. We give as a conclusion to this chapter a few salient features of Leo XIII's masterly Encyclical "On the Condition of Working-men," in which he points out the wretched slavery they often live in, the consideration they are entitled to, and the beneficial influence that can be exercised by the Church and the clergy on their behalf.

The sympathy of the Church for the workingman

There can be no doubt, he says, but that the condition of the working-classes is *the pressing question of the hour*. Some remedy must be found, and found quickly, for the wretchedness weighing heavily and unjustly on the *vast majority* of the toilers. It happens under our very eyes that a small number of very rich men lay upon the teeming masses a yoke often *little better than slavery itself*. Now it may be truly said that it is only by the labour of the working-man that States grow rich, and therefore the more that is done for the benefit of those who work the more prosperous will be the commonwealth. Hence the Church is solicitous for the welfare of the breadwinners. She warns them against men of evil principles who delude them with artful promises and foolish hopes. She appeals to all her own children, to all men, and to the State, to *save the toilers from the cruelty of greedy speculators*, from the bondage of those who use human beings as mere chattels for money-making. She proclaims without hesitation that it is the duty of the rich and all who have received God's gifts in abundance to share them freely with those who are in need. She teaches that society can be healed only by a return to Christian principles, by *a high*

standard of morality in public and in private, and by counteracting the twin plagues—greed of possession and thirst for pleasure—which make men miserable even in the midst of abundance. She protects the spiritual and temporal rights of the working-classes, claiming for them adequate time to honour God and sanctify their lives, leisure and rest proportionate to the wear and tear of their strength, remuneration sufficient to sustain a family in reasonable comfort, and protection from conditions of labour repugnant to man's dignity. She desires to see property more equitably divided, to encourage working-men's unions, to foster a kindlier and closer intercourse between capital and labour, between rich and poor, and to inspire each class with a sense of its duties to the other, especially of the duties of justice. And therefore she directs all ministers of religion to incessantly urge upon all classes of society the evangelical principles of life, to strive by every means in their power to secure the good of the people, and, above all, to cherish in themselves and to awaken in others charity, the mistress and queen of virtues.[1]

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[1] *Rerum Novarum,* May, 1891.

CHAPTER VIII

Qui bene versatus est in rebus temporalibus.

WHILE a priest is prepared to live and work wherever duty calls him, even in the midst of an unhealthy and uncomfortable environment, yet, as far as circumstances allow, he ought, in the erection and management of a presbytery and of other buildings, to pay reasonable attention to all the canons of sanitary science. He ought to see that all parts of a house have the benefit of air and sunlight, that there is an efficient system of ventilation, that the sewage and gas pipes, the fireplaces and chimney stacks, are examined from time to time, and that nothing is allowed to accumulate in the immediate neighbourhood, such as decaying vegetable matter, which would be likely to breed disease. If the air of a room becomes polluted by respiration, gas, or the products of combustion, it will certainly be unwholesome and oppressive, perhaps even dangerous.

A priest's house

In case you are called upon to undertake building operations select a good architect, show him if possible an existing structure such as you desire, and make clear to him whatever modifications may be necessary. To guard against future misunderstandings, take care that your contracts with builders and others are explicit, unambiguous, and in writing. It is well

to fix the time or times at which subscriptions are to be paid, as many people are apt to be more generous in their promises than their payments. The publication at regular intervals of the moneys received and disbursed will both stimulate and interest the people, who like to see the good they are accomplishing.

Furniture

Apart from the ordinary principles of sanitation, the general character of a priest's home should be marked by simplicity and a certain amount of religious feeling. Hence, in site and size and style, it should be unpretentious, not provoking unfriendly comment nor exceeding the moderate requirements of one who has left all things for the sake of Christ. Ornaments should be plain and solid, furniture not extravagant, and pictures and prints not of a kind to offend the eyes of modesty. It often happens that a priest's house is "the house of God" (and whenever it is so there ought to be a little Oratory specially set apart for the becoming reservation of the Blessed Sacrament), but whether we consider it as such or as the home of God's minister we are shocked to find it resembling a lady's boudoir or in any way "ministering to luxury or worldly desires."[1]

From a moral point of view, also, a priest's house ought to be an example to others of Christian becomingness and decorum. If he knows not how to govern his own home, how will he take care of the Church of God?[2] If he and his do not honour the Holy Family, if the Rosary and evening prayers are not daily

[1] Fourth Westminster Council. [2] 1 Tim. iii.

recited in the church or with his own household,[1] if good order does not mark his domestic arrangements, if it gets noised abroad that his house is ill-managed and his accounts slovenly and in arrears, will not a heavy discount be knocked off all his exhortations, will not his character be greatly damaged, will not his influence insensibly decline ?

A domestic

It is no easy task to select a servant who will neither spoil one's stomach and temper nor violate the statutes. According to the Council of Trent, there must be no woman in a priest's house who would be likely to give rise to suspicion against him. Hence his servant ought to be mature in years, and spotless in reputation —in the words of the Third Synod of Baltimore, *integerrima fama et maturioris aetatis.* In fact, countless local statutes specify her age as " passing forty." If she is attentive to her religious duties, not affected or vain in her dress, modest, civil to visitors, and neither a chatterbox nor a newsmonger, she deserves to be fully trusted and paid generous wages with unfailing regularity. But however valuable a servant may be, there are certain precautions which a priest will do well to observe in her regard, so as to keep her in her place, and not to lessen by a hair's breadth his own dignity and authority. Such are, to be rather distant and reserved with her, not to hear her confession, not to make her a confidante of one's troubles, not to discuss parochial affairs with her or in her presence, not to seek information from her,

[1] Sydney Synod (1885), n. 156; Synod of Maynooth (1900), n. 196.

never to allow her to interfere directly or indirectly with visitors or parishioners, to give her neither presents nor much praise, not to scold her so as to bring tears to her eyes, to trust her and leave all details of housekeeping to her, but at the same time to use pass-books and account books, and to keep letters and money under lock and key.

Rules of health

As, according to Ecclesiasticus,[1] "there is no riches above the riches of health," and as man's mental and moral condition is greatly influenced by the state of the body, it will not be amiss to keep in mind certain cardinal rules of well-being. They are, in the words of Lecky, "moderation and self-restraint in all things—an abundance of exercise, of air, and of cold water—a sufficiency of steady work not carried to excess[2]—occasional change of habits—and abstinence from a few things which are manifestly injurious to health." In an old Latin proverb, two others are specified, namely, *mens laeta et moderata diaeta*—a bright and cheerful disposition, for "sadness hath killed many and there is no profit in it;" and dietary at once simple, moderate, and regular. "By surfeiting many have perished; but he that is temperate shall prolong his life."[3] Nothing is more essential for a hard-working man, to repair the wastage of mind and body, than a due allowance of sleep—sleep at once natural and regular, not preceded by a heavy supper, nor indulged in to excess. It appears to be the opinion of medical men that alcohol is innutritious,

[1] Chap. xxx.
[2] *Nunquam sis ex toto otiosus.*—*Imitation*, bk. i. chap. xix.
[3] Ecclus. xxxvii. 34.

that it is injurious in the impressionable period of youth, that it easily generates an almost *ineradicable craving*, and that taken in manhood in any considerable quantity it is calculated to alarm and overwork the heart, to dilate the smaller arteries of the system, and gradually to enfeeble the finer nervous mechanism. Dr. Moriarty, realizing the physical and moral havoc wrought by intemperance, the facility with which a habit of drink sometimes steals on the inexperience of youth as well as on the imbecility of old age, and the need of the constant watchfulness of a friend or monitor, cries out to us all: "For God's sake, should any brother in your house or neighbourhood show signs of ruin in this way save him while there is time." And Archbishop Ireland, the illustrious Apostle of Total Abstinence, on the occasion of a visit to All Hallows College, in 1886, concluded an eloquent address to the students in words somewhat to the following effect:—

Archbishop Ireland's advice

"My dear young friends, for your own sake, for your people's sake, for love of Patrick, above all for love of God, fall not away from your present fervour, be loyal to the pledge you have taken. Whether it be for life or for a term of years, it will bring down upon you many real blessings. It will give you health and security, power and influence. It will protect you from the insidious advances of intemperance and all its confederate evils. It will keep your head unclouded, your heart equable and robust. It will make your words eloquent, your example contagious. It will make you respected by those without as well as by those within the fold. And when your work is done—your

journey ended, and your tents folded—it will place upon your brows an amaranthine crown of glory."

While, however, taking reasonable care of one's health one must guard against the mischievous error of over-solicitude. "The habit that so often grows upon men with slight chronic maladies, or feeble temperament, or idle lives, of making their own health and their own ailments the constant subject of their thoughts soon becomes *a disease very fatal to happiness,* and positively injurious to health."[1] "I firmly believe," says an eminent physician, "one half of the confirmed invalids of the day could be cured of their maladies if they were compelled to live *active lives,* and had no time to fret over their miseries. . . . Those who desire to live should settle this well in their minds, that nerve power is the force of life."

Solicitude about health

. . . . . .

Greed for money is not a characteristic of young men. It is more apt to come with advancing years, and with a growing solicitude for the things of the world. Nevertheless, the seeds of cupidity often take root at an early period and yield a premature crop. An unmortified self-indulgent disposition, extravagance in dress, food, or furniture, immoderation in pleasures and amusements, nepotism—that ugly excrescence of human affection—any or all of these may easily create a ravenous hunger for money, and with it many other unprofitable and hurtful desires. Even respectable

Greed for money

[1] Lecky, *Map of Life.*

motives sometimes disguise the odious features of avarice, and an ambition to accomplish some deed of benevolence or some act of religion may fetter a man to the service of Mammon. Hence Christ says: "Take care to keep yourselves far from every kind of covetousness." There is nothing more wicked—*nihil est scelestius*. It is a mercenary spirit. It is the service of idols. It is a snare of the spirit of evil, *laqueus diaboli*. It makes a man hard, sordid, and ungracious to the poor. It teaches him to view every function and appointment, even the flock itself, from a purely pecuniary standpoint. It makes him a keen negotiator in prayers, Masses, and Sacraments. It closes his mouth on the precept of almsgiving. It closes his heart to every generous instinct. In a word, no matter how upright and exemplary a priest may be, avarice makes him hateful to God and to the people, and destroys all confidence in his life and teaching.[1] Therefore, do thou, O man of God, shun these things, "on no account directly or indirectly ask anything when administering the Divine Mysteries,"[2] retrench your wants, be content with few things, and lay up for yourselves a treasure in Heaven that will never fail. Had the Apostles raised ten thousand dead to life, and been wanting in contempt for the riches and glory of this world, far from converting souls they would have been treated as impostors.[3] And if the laity see that a priest is trying to serve

[1] "And when the people see a priest more zealous for money than for souls they will close their hearts to his most passionate pleadings."—Archbishop Ullathorne, *Ecclesiastical Discourses*.

[2] St. Chrysostom.

[3] Ritual. *Non quaero quae vestra sunt sed vos.*—2 Cor. xii.

God and gold, feeding the flock for filthy lucre's sake, "they will begin by feeling disrespect and disgust for him, then indifference for his ministry, and then less and less love for the faith which he professes." [1]

Rules of business

One of the apostolic canons points out that a Bishop, though chiefly concerned with the precious souls of men, is also bound to superintend the temporal affairs of a diocese. Hence, as guardian of all diocesan property it is his duty to see that, in all places subject to his jurisdiction, ecclesiastical goods are administered with caution and care. He should get rectors and all who have charge of Church property to render each year a full and exact account of their administration, a summary of which, having been notified to the people, should be deposited in the archives. "Let Missionary Rectors," says the Third Synod of Baltimore,[2] "keep an account book, in which receipts and expenses, rights and obligations . . . titles, mortgages and debts, etc., are clearly and accurately posted in their proper places." With such an account book, carefully kept, it will be easy for Bishop, rector, or auditor to compile, when necessary, a statement of the financial position of a parish, and thus to ascertain all a priest has received in the way of offerings, intentions, alms for the poor, contributions for the Church or for some special purpose, as well as all that he has disbursed to teachers, merchants, tradesmen, and others. Many clergymen make use, moreover, of a small memorandum book, with de-

[1] Moriarty, *Allocutions*, p. 62.
[2] N. 275. See also Synod of Maynooth (1900), n. 339.

tachable leaves, in which they *enter daily* every important matter that deserves attention or that ought to be transferred subsequently to the account book.

The Council of Baltimore [1] gives also the following directions :—

(1) Unless they possess written episcopal permission, priests are forbidden to receive deposits of money on the condition of afterwards paying them back with interest.[2] Such a practice, even on the pretext of benefiting some pious undertaking, would easily give rise to suspicions, contentions, lawsuits, and calumnies, thus discrediting the clergy and disedifying the laity.

(2) Without the Bishop's written license priests are not to contract parochial debts under any pretext whatever, or personal debts in the name of the mission.[3]

(3) In case priests wish to give a loan of their own money for the use of the Church, they are not to do so without certain formalities, such as obtaining the Bishop's approval, and getting the transfer of the money properly witnessed and registered.

(4) Rectors and persons in charge of pious institutions are on no account to mix their private property with ecclesiastical goods. To do so injures their good name, gives rise to litigation, offends the faithful, and injures the Church. They should, therefore, be required to draw up a double inventory —one for the diocesan, another for the parochial,

[1] Second, nn. 159, 192 ; Third, titulus ix. c. iii. iv.
[2] Cf. Synod of Maynooth, nn. 205 and 206.
[3] Synod of Maynooth (1900), n. 323.

archives—in which all the goods, movable or immovable, that belong to the mission or pious institute should be enumerated. This inventory should be annually brought up to date and presented to a new rector on his arrival. Any deliberate falsification of the temporal, *a fortiori* of the spiritual, state of a mission is a grave canonical offence, liable to entail deposition.

(5) According to the decision of the Synod of Baltimore a priest cannot claim as his own any gifts destined for ecclesiastical purposes, such as chalices, vestments, etc., unless the donors expressly intended them for his exclusive use.

(6) If priests act in the spirit of the Gospel and according to the counsels of Christian charity, they will contribute some of their superfluous means to pious purposes, and, when drawing up their wills, will not, as sometimes happens, altogether forget the Church and the poor. Moreover, in order to guard against confusion and lawsuits, and to save pious bequests from the invalidity which the civil law attaches to those made only a short time before death, priests are exhorted by many Councils to make their wills in good time and validly—*tempestive ad normam legum civilium.*[1]

(7) Priests should use the utmost care in obtaining proper titles for ecclesiastical property. All such titles, as well as the insurance policies of parochial buildings, should be registered in the names of persons approved by the Ordinary. Lay wardens are not to be selected for the administration of ecclesiastical

[1] Read n. 277, Third Synod of Baltimore; also Maynooth Synod (1900), nn. 212 and 269.

property without the written sanction of the Bishop. His approval must be obtained, also, in case a priest wishes to undertake some new parochial building, or to introduce changes in existing Church property.

(8) Every rector ought to have a safe—*capsa sufficienter capax et munita*—for the security of all parochial books, inventories, wills, and official documents, which deal with the spiritual or temporal affairs of the mission (registers of births, marriages, deaths, of the confirmed and of the *Status animarum*.)[1]

. . . . . .

Contributions of the faithful

"As the faithful, even the poor amongst them, contribute with generous alacrity to the needs of the Church, there is no excuse for certain methods of obtaining money, which, besides being an occasion of sin and scandal, bring ridicule and contempt on the Catholic cause."[2] To contribute to religious objects is an act of religion as certainly as to pray, and it should be put before the people in this light, and not made an occasion for offending God. Quietly, and without any of the vehemence of self-interest, a priest should explain to them their duty, and convince them that an offertory, a tithing unto God, will bring a reward, even in this life, by abating avarice and quickening good-will. The many acts of self-denial involved in monetary payments should not be deprived of their spiritual value by lack of proper

[1] Synod of Maynooth (1900), n. 338. If asked for information give an extract, but never give a register into the hands of seculars.

[2] Second Council of Baltimore, n. 396.

motives, and therefore all methods of finance likely to stimulate the baser elements in human nature—pride, vanity, jealous emulation, uncharitableness—which it is the priestly calling to suppress, should be rigidly avoided. Moreover, if the parochial assessments are so arranged as to be regular, definite, and proportionately distributed, the people will readily respond to their duty, and they will rejoice to be secure from the worry and irritation of constant begging as well as of vague and spasmodic appeals. A system of revenue wisely conceived and well executed is as superior to desultory efforts as skilled and organized labour to what is unskilled and unorganized. "A successful manager," remarks Father Smith, LL.D., "forms his plans quietly, quietly describes them to the people, and then quietly puts them in execution. He has no more to say until he makes his report of results, and thanks the contributors for their efforts." People naturally like to know how much has been collected, how it has been expended, and how much good has been accomplished. They take an interest in what they support; they are gratified by good results; they are drawn into closer unity by common aims and common contributions.

"In your commerce with the world," says the author of *Friends in Council*, "let moral qualities be cultivated first—they are the essential qualities of a man of business—let a bold but not unkind sincerity be the groundwork of all your dealings with others; and let anything like juggling dexterity be avoided, except in so far as dexterity may be necessary to circumvent the

Some precautions

cunning of others." Be straightforward, truthful, and scrupulously exact. "Clear and round dealing is the honour of man's nature."[1] Those who are deceitful or faithless in little things cannot be trusted in greater. "Neither a borrower nor a lender be," for borrowing is the canker of every man's estate. Live within your revenue. If a friend or parishioner wants you to give a loan or to endorse a note, your wisest course will be to refuse what is asked, and to make a donation of what you can conveniently spare.

Buy books for reading, not for ornament, and furniture according to your means and your necessities. "If any man hath done any work for thee, immediately pay him his hire, and let not the wages of thy hired servant stay with thee at all."[2] Think how painful it must be to business men and creditors to be forced to seek payment of what is due to them through the intervention of ecclesiastical or civil authorities. Never take on yourself the duties of trustee, executor, guardian, or surety; intermeddle not in the making of wills;[3] and as far as possible keep clear of all offices and undertakings that are unsuited to a spiritual guide and that are apt to give rise to misunderstandings, disagreements, and contentions. In case you become the recipient, in any capacity, of considerable sums of money, at once acknowledge them, lodge them in bank, and enter them in a cash book. In making large payments do so by cheque.

As the written word is regarded as an index of

[1] Bacon, *Truth*. [2] Tob. iv. 15. [3] Maynooth Synod, n. 204.

character, and is often utilized as such long after it has been written, the following suggestions deserve attention. A letter ought to be free from all exaggerations, simple and accurate in style, moderate, if not parsimonious, in the use of adjectives, faultless in spelling, and legible in penmanship. It may be laid down as a general rule that all letters, invitations, inquiries, and receipts ought to be acknowledged.[1] Most people treat petitions for their money or their custom as an exception to this rule. A prompt reply is best, unless it has been written under excitement, in which case some delay is advisable. It is necessary to guard carefully against mistakes in the mode of addressing correspondents, as many people are very punctilious about their rank and titles, and may be easily offended. Read a letter before despatching it, and re-write it if necessary. Should you be asked for a letter of introduction or commendation, take care not to write anything that would deceive or mislead others. People expect a priest to be honourable and trustworthy. They will be shocked if they ever find that he signs a statement or document without having made a due investigation of its contents.

Letters

BOOKS OF REFERENCE:

A Business Guide for Priests. Stang.
Self-Help, and other works. Smiles.

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[1] When priests are requested to send a *testimonium liberi status, they ought do so at once.* Neglect in so important a matter would bring discredit on the sacred ministry.—See Maynooth Synod (1900), xx. 162.

CHAPTER IX

Hic jam quaeritur inter dispensatores
ut fidelis quis inveniatur.

THOUGH religion is pre-eminently a spiritual gift, consisting in the knowledge and in the love of God, yet it depends to a large extent on the senses and on things external. The senses are its partners, working with it, and intensifying its acts; they are its medium of communication with the material world, enlarging its field of speculation; and they are its artists, symbolizing in word and deed, in line, form, and colour, its noblest concepts and aspirations. Through the things that are made the soul beholds the things that are invisible. Through Christ, seen, heard, and touched, we obtain the fullest revelation of the Mystery of God. Through lowly elements, such as water, bread, and wine—through simple actions, such as washing, anointing, and imposing of hands—we receive fellowship with Christ, and an abundance of Christian privileges. Through the entire liturgy of the Church, with its noble temples, its sacred music, its venerable vestments, its ancient language, its flowers and incense, our thoughts are elevated, our passions purified, and our affections ennobled. See how the Sacraments operate. They are divine actions, divine in their origin, divine in their efficacy. They create, they cleanse, they confirm, they heal.

Sacramental efficacy

They are the vivifying touch of Christ, supernaturalizing the soul, endowing it with beauty, enriching it with virtue, preserving it from sin, and entitling it to eternal life. Yet this marvellous efficacy is enshrined in weak elements, in words of human speech, in lowly actions, in symbols that appeal to eye and ear, in sacred signs that depend for their being on the ministry of men.

How important it is, therefore, that priests should be faithful dispensers of the Mysteries of God. With what interior and exterior reverence they should treat Sacraments and ceremonies. How pure ought be their hearts, how decorous their outward bearing, how free from levity their words and looks; in the house of God and in all the functions of the ministry how modest and reverent ought be their whole deportment. Yet it sometimes happens that the influence of the liturgy and its sacred accessories is weakened, even spoiled, by the negligence if not irreverence of a priest. He loves not the beauty of God's house, he neglects the altar, he allows vestments and altar linen to be shabby and soiled, he talks unnecessarily in the Divine Presence, he genuflects in a slovenly way, he robs the sacred Mysteries of their native dignity, he hurries through the ceremonies of the Mass as if rushing for a train,[1] he administers the Sacraments in a perfunctory fashion, he mumbles his sermons, he recites the Rosary and other prayers with a sort of mechanical routine, at

Faithful dispensers of the Mysteries of God

[1] *Certissimum est non deesse qui sacrum negligentissime faciunt . . . Sacrificant au insultant?*—Benedict XIV, *De Sacrif. Missae.*

Offices for the Dead he betrays an utter lack of sympathy and reality. What wonder if onlookers are disgusted rather than edified, if their confidence is shaken, if they come to the conclusion that such a priest hardly believes what he professes.

In order that God's minister may fulfil his sacred functions with the exactitude and becomingness which they demand, he should read the rubrics of the Roman Ritual at least *once a year*.[1] "Before he proceeds to administer a Sacrament he should, if convenient, give a little time to prayer, and to reflection on the holy action he is about to perform"—*divinum auxilium piis precibus implorabit*.[2] In the exercise of his ministry he should pronounce every word in a clear voice—*clarâ você*—distinctly, attentively, and with piety. There should be nothing affected or professional in his demeanour, nothing put on for the occasion. Let him be earnest. Let him act with faith and in concert with Christ. Let him offer the Holy Sacrifice with every outward mark of reverence, as well as with all possible purity of heart.[3] In all his arrangements let him provide for the convenience of the people. Let him say Mass at an hour that will suit the largest number possible. Let him render his services cheerfully and promptly, never alienating any parishioner by surliness or reluctance—*facilem et promptum se exhibeat*.[4] Let him avoid all acceptance of persons, and tend the poor and the uncultured

[1] Second Council of Baltimore, n. 209; see also Synod of Maynooth (1900), n. 40.

[2] Roman Ritual.

[3] "*Devota celebratio missae est aliquod genus praedicationis.*"—Mierts.

[4] Synod of Maynooth (1900), n. 45.

no less lovingly and indefatigably than the cultured and the rich.[1] Let him *often explain the symbolism of the Church.* On no occasion and on no account let him shock the simple faith of the laity, but, on the contrary, let him endeavour by all lawful ways to keep alive in their hearts a remembrance of the things that are not seen.

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Baptism holds first place amongst the Sacraments. For multitudes it is the only way to Heaven. For all it is the visible entrance to the Catholic Church. "Unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God." By the laver of regeneration Christians are purified from defilement, incorporated with Christ, and adorned with supernatural loveliness. So marvellous are its effects that their frequent and accurate exposition is found to be a most efficacious means of filling the minds of the faithful with a zeal for true piety and with admiration for the goodness of God. Hence, the Sacred Scripture, and in particular St. Paul, dwells again and again in energetic language on the transcendent dignity of this Sacrament—on the supernatural character that it impresses on the soul, on the divine illumination that it communicates to the intellect, on the train of infused virtues that accompany it—and reminds all Christians that, as in baptism they die and are buried with Christ, so with Christ they should arise in the likeness of His resur-

Baptism and sponsorship

[1] *Nolite habere fidem . . . Christi in acceptione personarum.*—James ii. See also Sydney Synod (1885), nn. 100-102.

rection and walk in newness of life. Hence, "it is the duty of priests to see that all the faithful (more especially doctors, nurses, and midwives) fully understand the importance of baptism and the proper way to confer it."[1] Moreover, as very many infants are born to all appearance dead, midwives should be instructed by doctors *de baptizando foetu nisi signa mortis sint certa, id est nisi putrefactio jam certo apparuerit.*[2]

As everyone after birth requires a nurse and instructor, so those who are born by baptism to spiritual life have need of a sponsor or guardian (godfather or godmother) who will introduce them to the Church and train them in the rudiments of faith. They should, says the Catechism of the Council of Trent, be entrusted to the care of some prudent Christian, under whose guidance they may grow up gradually to perfect manhood in Christ. "Few, however, have the least idea of the sanctity of sponsorship." The name of the office is familiar enough, but its duties, its responsibilities, are unknown and neglected. And yet sponsorship of its very nature implies the following promises: "I will be a spiritual father to this child; I will watch over its spiritual interests; I will not allow it to wander away from God; by advice and exhortation I will strive to keep it loyal to its baptismal vows." It is clear, therefore, that sponsorship is a sacred trust, and should not be confided to those who are unwilling to discharge its duties with fidelity, or

[1] Second Council of Baltimore, n. 228.

[2] Vide Eschbach, Antonelli, O'Kane. *Quam plurimi infantes nascuntur in statu mortis apparentis.*—Antonelli, vol. ii. n. 611.

who cannot do so with accuracy. Heretics, Jews, and infidels are on no account to be accepted as godparents.[1] And in case non-Catholics present themselves a priest should candidly explain why they are inadmissible. Such an explanation, no matter how prudently conveyed, may at times prove either inopportune or unsatisfactory, and then it would probably be advisable to make a compromise and to admit them as witnesses and participants in the ceremony, but not as sponsors. In other words, only a Catholic ought to be allowed, at the actual pouring of the water, to *touch* the person to be baptized, and it should never be very difficult for a priest to arrange beforehand with a Catholic (the sexton or some other suitable person) to be present when the Sacrament is being conferred. But if no Catholic can be had it is better to dispense altogether with a sponsor than accept a non-Catholic. *Praestare ut baptismus conferatur sine patrino, si aliter fieri non possit.*[2]

. . . . . .

Clerical vocations—a priest's duty

Magni profecto interest, ut Ecclesiae futuri ministri a teneris unguiculis singulari studio ad pietatem et doctrinam informentur. "It is of very great importance to train up the future ministers of the Church in knowledge and piety from their tenderest years." No one will venture to gainsay this statement of the Third Council of Baltimore.[3] Worthy and loyal clerics are the greatest blessing—*donum maximum*—that Heaven

[1] Catechism of Council of Trent. [2] S. Offic., May 3, 1893.
[3] N. 136.

can bestow on the Christian commonwealth. They build up the body of Christ—that is, the Church—and they make perfect the saints.[1] They enlighten by their teaching, purify by their example, and console by their charity. They are the leaders of the people, the shepherds of the flock. They prepare the way of the Lord, they announce the joyful tidings of Redemption, they faithfully dispense the Mysteries of God. Without good priests the faithful live in darkness, in wretchedness, in sin. Alas for the sheepfold that has no shepherds! Alas still more for the sheepfold whose shepherds feed themselves but feed not the flock.

A good priest ought to be solicitous for the welfare of the Church. He ought to foster the germs of every true vocation to the clerical state. He ought to instruct parents on the duty they owe to those of their children who desire to dedicate themselves to the service of God. Sometimes at Quarter Tense, and preferably the previous Sunday, he ought explain to the faithful the meaning of those recurrent seasons of fast, describe to them the dignity and responsibility of the priesthood, and urge them to pray the Lord of the harvest to send workmen to do the harvesting. *Orare Dominum messis ut mittat operarios in messem suam.*

A timely exposition of the Sacrament of Orders cannot fail to prove salutary to the pastor himself, to those whom the Lord has called to the Sanctuary, and to the faithful at large: to the pastor himself, because whilst he explains the Sacrament to others

[1] Ephes. iv.

he will be stimulated to reanimate in himself the grace which he received at ordination; to those who have embraced the ecclesiastical state, because they will be reminded of the qualities which will justify them in advancing to higher orders; and finally to the faithful at large, because it will make them acquainted with the excellence of the priesthood and with the respect that is due to ministers of religion.[1]

In respectable Catholic families a priest will often come across boys who feel attracted towards the Sanctuary. *Juvenes qui ad clericale tyrocinium vocati videantur.* He can instruct them in piety, advise them to pray for divine guidance, assist them with books, shield them from the contagion of the world, and appeal to their parents not to interfere with the designs of God. He can do more. He can remove obstacles that lie in the way of many a solid vocation; for it sometimes happens that a boy endowed with an aptitude for studies and with a devout and generous disposition is prevented by poverty from entering the Sanctuary. In such cases let a priest contribute a little to the support of a student, let him solicit something from the people for a scholar's fund, let him aid in the establishment of college burses. He can perform no nobler act of faith or charity. An American priest adopted the following plan of helping young aspirants to the clerical state. He advanced money to them, and received in return a written promise that they would refund it after their ordination. The plan was simple and successful. He lost little, did much good, and merited well of the Church.

[1] Cf. the Catechism of the Council of Trent; Sacrament of Orders.

Parents need to be carefully instructed on the question of vocation. They occasionally hold very erroneous views on this matter—views which may involve serious consequences. Some are worldly-minded, and, instead of encouraging, they discountenance and repress any inclination on the part of a child to become a servant of the Most High. On the one hand they unduly exaggerate the difficulties and dangers of the sacred calling, and on the other they paint in glowing colours the advantages of a secular life. To such parents the American Bishops address a solemn appeal: "We implore you not to frustrate the designs of God upon your children. When you perceive in them a growing desire to give themselves to the service of the altar, do not stand in the way, do not turn them aside from the highest privilege that Heaven bestows on man." [1]

Some parents go to the opposite extreme, and, with even greater recklessness, endeavour to press one or other of their boys into the Holy of Holies. Their motive may be good, or it may be altogether human. In any case the true nature of a vocation should be made clear to them, and they should be warned of the sad consequences of forcing a young fellow into the Church who does not possess the qualities that indicate a special call from God.

The office of the priesthood should not be rashly imposed on anyone; it is to be entrusted only to those who by the sanctity of their lives, their knowledge, their faith, and their prudence are capable of sustaining its weight. "Let no one take this honour

[1] Cf. Pastoral Letter, Second Synod of Baltimore.

to himself, but he that is called by God."[1] Sacrilegious intruders bring the greatest misery on themselves, and the heaviest calamities on the Church. Candidates for the ministry should be admonished to propose to themselves no motive unworthy of so exalted a station. This is an admonition which deserves particular attention in our days, when people are too unmindful of its spirit; for some there are who aspire to the priesthood in order to secure a livelihood, and who think of nothing but sordid pelf; others there are who are attracted to the altar by a love of honours and a spirit of ambition. But those who undertake the priestly office in obedience to the call of God, and solely in order to promote His glory, they and they alone can be truly said "to enter by the door."[2]

Parochus alumnos clericos adhibeat in operibus ministerii quae ipsis competunt. . . . Finitis vacationibus, gravata ejus conscientia, tenetur, clausis litteris, Episcopum aut Seminarii Superiorem informare de moribus alumnorum."[3]

. . . . . .

The encouragement of frequent Communion

It is the duty of pastors, preachers, and confessors to exhort the faithful "frequently and with great zeal" to the salutary practice of daily, or at least frequent, Communion. The soul stands no less in need of spiritual than the body of corporal food. So well did the early Christians realize this that they

[1] Heb. v.
[2] Cf. Catechism of the Council of Trent, loc. cit.
[3] Third Council of Baltimore, n. 177.

came every day to the table of the Lord. They sinned daily, therefore they communicated daily. They felt their weakness and they sought for strength. They were troubled with the fire of concupiscence and they extinguished it with the fire of charity. They were weary and they came to Christ for refreshment. They were thirsty and they hastened to the Fountain of Life. They were hungry and they nourished themselves with the Bread that came down from Heaven. What those early Christians did the faithful of modern times must also do. The soul's need of spiritual nourishment has not diminished with the passage of time. To-day, as in the past, it suffers daily waste, it is assailed with temptations, it often lapses into sin, it grows faint, it loses relish for the things of God; hence it needs to be sustained. It needs all the nutriment symbolized by the bread and wine of the altar. It needs the daily Eucharist.

Who can wonder, therefore, that Pius X has interdicted controversy on the dispositions requisite for Holy Communion, and has opened the Tabernacle to all who come as friends of God and with a right intention? The Supreme Pastor of the faithful knows the wants of his flock. He knows, too, the Banquet that is ever ready for them. He sends forth messengers to the streets, the lanes, the hedge-rows. He invites all, even the poor, the blind, the lame. He makes no distinction of rank, condition, or age. He insists on no excessive preparation, on no elaborate ceremonial. A wedding robe and a right intention—these suffice. *No one may be denied even daily Communion who is free from mortal sin*

and anxious to please God.[1] More perfect dispositions are desirable, but not necessary. It is expedient to recommend the faithful to get rid of lesser faults, and to make a suitable preparation before Holy Communion, but if they fail to do so they should not be discouraged, they should not be kept back from the table of the Lord. That table is the chief nourishment of the Christian soul. It is a fountain of grace. Other Sacraments are channels of grace, are sacred symbols of Christ. The Eucharist is a fountain—it is Christ Himself, the friend of sinners and the healer of the nations. He comes not as a judge to review our backslidings, not as a king to receive our homage, but as He entered Jerusalem on the eve of His immolation—meek, lowly, and hidden beneath a humble guise. He comes to the poorest quarters, the lowest slums, the most wretched hovels. He shrinks from none except declared enemies. His one desire, the main purpose of His condescension, is to cast fire upon the earth, to calm human passions, to supply an antidote against sin, to raise the fallen, to confirm the strong, and to give unto all a pledge of eternal life.

A priest can do much to promote the practice of frequent Communion. In the pulpit he can, in season and out of season, describe with earnestness, if not with eloquence, the wonderful effects it produces in body and soul. In the confessional he can recommend his penitents to come often and regularly to the sublime Banquet of the altar. In the school-

[1] St. Francis of Sales (*Devout Life*) required an absence of all affection to venial sin for weekly Communion; St. Alphonsus (*Praxis*, n. 152) insisted on the same disposition for frequent Communion.

room and the catechism class he can teach the little ones of Christ that there is no surer way of keeping themselves innocent and pure, and of resembling the Sacred Heart of Jesus, than by often receiving the chalice of salvation.

People are held back from frequent Communion by a variety of reasons: some, because their faith is weak, because they do not realize what a treasure the Eucharist is; others, because they are overmastered by a sense of unworthiness and a reverential awe of the tremendous majesty of God; and others again, especially men, are reluctant to be seen often at the altar rails, are fearful of being numbered among the "unco guid," and, moreover, have a natural dislike to the preliminary probation—*probet autem seipsum homo*—prescribed by the Church.

Now in all these cases a zealous priest can do much to attract people to Holy Communion. He can quicken their faith in the Real Presence. He can often remind them of Its primary purpose. He can draw a clear distinction between the dispositions that are essential in a communicant and those that are only expedient and of counsel. He can lay great stress on the meekness, the humility, of Jesus, and the boundless love that has made Him a prisoner in our midst. He can repeat again and again in the words of the recent Decree[1] that "it is the desire of our Lord and of the Church that all the faithful should daily approach the Holy Table." He can be frank and friendly with men; he can show them that he is pleased when they come to Communion, especially

[1] Decree of S.C.C., December 20, 1905.

when they come in a body ; he can make the Sacrament of Penance as easy and as attractive as possible for them ; and he can take every precaution that they are not kept too long waiting for confession.

Children and the Holy Table

In a special way it is the duty of a priest to attract the young of both sexes to the Holy Table. They are the hope of the future—*spes carissima civitatis et religionis.*[1] They are the chosen ones of Christ, the elect of His Kingdom. "Therefore they may and ought[2] communicate as frequently as adults do. Our Lord does not require more of them than they are capable of giving, and He understands the thoughtlessness which alarms us. He knows far better than we do that innocence is their most precious treasure, that Satan tries to rob them of it early, and that Communion is their chief safeguard against his wiles.[3] In order to receive our Saviour profitably it is enough to be sincere, . . . and experience proves that the most genuine sincerity is to be found in children who have made their first Communion. They love Jesus Christ—they desire to have Him—then why not give Him to them ? They are very often more fit to receive Him than ourselves, even though we may think otherwise ; for in spite of their thoughtlessness they are good and affectionate. Hence it is our duty to give their love its true nourishment, to

[1] Pius X.

[2] A priest should be careful neither by words nor by acts to lead children (or others) to think that they are obliged to go frequently to Holy Communion. Even when urging frequency he should take into account the difficulty of fasting and other circumstances in particular cases.

[3] *Adolescentes fallaciis undique cincti et corruptelis.*—Pius X.

afford them close and frequent intercourse with Jesus, and thus to prevent their faults from taking root and growing into deadly vices."[1]

BOOKS OF REFERENCE:

Christian Worship : Its Origin and Evolution. Duchesne.
The Mass. Gihr (translated).
The Liturgical Year. Guéranger.
The New Raccolta.
Les Indulgences. Beringer.
Catholic Worship. Oakley.
Sacramentals. Lambing.
Compendium Sacrae Liturgiae. Wapelhorst.
A Bishop and his Flock. Hedley.
The Parish Priest on Duty. Heuser.
**The Christian Year.* Keble.
The Blessed Eucharist. Hedley.
First Communion. Mother Loyola.
Choice of a State of Life. Rossignoli.
De Vocatione. Nilles.
Thoughts and Counsels for Young Men. Doss.
Questions on Vocation.

N.B.—The first five deserve special attention.

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[1] Cong. Conc., September 15, 1906; *Acta Sanctae Sedis*, p. 500.

CHAPTER X

Sacramentum hoc magnum est, ego autem dico in Christo et in Ecclesia.

A PRIEST'S first duty in connexion with matrimony is to insist again and again on its sacred character. "The greatest care," says Leo XIII, "must be taken to warn the faithful that matrimony was not instituted by the will of man, but, from the very beginning, by the authority and command of God."[1] Many people look upon it mainly as a solemn engagement, or perhaps as an interesting religious rite, and forget altogether its divine institution, its wonderful significance, and the copious graces which accompany its reception. The faithful, therefore, must be taught that the union of husband and wife is a holy union, typifying the perfect union of Christ with His Church, that it confers a spiritual loveliness which surpasses all human gifts and advantages, and that it guarantees God's special assistance for all the daily duties of the married state.

Matrimony sacred and indissoluble

The indissolubility of marriage is a natural consequence of its sacramental character. As the union of Christ and His spouse is inseparable, so should be the union of husband and wife. True love is eternal; its fidelity knows no end: hence the divine law of indissolubility. This law safeguards the love of a

[1] *Arcanum Divinae*, February 10, 1880.

married pair. It makes their attachment total and absolute. It allows no reserves or limitations. It protects the interests of home, of children, and of society. Without it there would be constant danger of unrest, suspicion, and disagreement, the children would be liable to lose a mother's tender care or a father's wise guidance, and the family circle, which is the basis of Christian society, would be gradually weakened and even undermined. Hence the faithful should be reminded from time to time of the beneficial consequences of indissolubility, so that they may not think it too rigorous a law. They should be advised to select a lifelong companion on the ground of virtue and congeniality of disposition, rather than on account of wealth or beauty. They should be persuaded to call prayer and prudence to their aid when making a choice : prayer, because " a silent loving woman is the gift of God," and it may be presumed that the same is true of a faithful husband ; prudence, because if people are slow in engaging a servant, and slower still in choosing a friend, how much more circumspect should they not be before concluding a religious compact which death alone doth sever. What sorrows young people sometimes bring upon themselves by entering the married state without any advertence to the dangers of heredity, and to the many morbid tendencies that may be transmitted by it. What a bondage it must be when two human beings are manacled together with antagonistic tastes, temperaments, and opinions. How humiliating for a wife when her most cherished ideas are derided or trampled upon by the very man to whom she has given her affections. How cheerless

and disappointing prove most of those matrimonial alliances which are prompted, not by harmony of sentiment and the mutual appreciation of Christian charity, but merely by ephemeral passion, by social prospects, or by commercial calculations. Hence the Catholic Church has always viewed mixed marriages with aversion. They are a serious menace to the perfect concord which ought to exist between husband and wife. They bind together minds and hearts that are at variance on many vital questions of faith, education, and history. They lead so commonly to dissension, to religious indifference, and even to apostasy, that a priest or a Bishop would be guilty of treason to Christ and to the faithful if he forbore to denounce them.[1]

"O human race! why dost thou set thy heart
Where interdict of partnership must be?"[2]

In a matter of such far-reaching consequences it is advisable to direct attention to a number of precautionary measures, nearly all of which are enumerated in the Third Council of Baltimore.[3]

Safeguards against mixed marriages

1. Those who have charge of souls should frequently instruct the faithful, both in the confessional and in the pulpit, on the Church's prohibition, and show how reasonable it is, even from a human point of view. They should explain the strong language of the Popes, some of whom say that it is shameful and others that it is even sacrilegious for Catholics to administer a Sacrament to

[1] Pastoral Letter, Australian Bishops, 1895.
[2] Dante, *Purgatorio*, xiv. 86. [3] N. 133.

those who do not believe in it, and who look upon it merely as a civil or at most as a religious ceremony. "The principal cause of the frequency of mixed marriages," says Dr. Ullathorne, "is the fact that their dangers are not adequately pointed out to the faithful in early youth, before the passions arise and interfere with the calm judgment of the question. If the prohibition and its causes are made known to the young before their passionate fancy gains its development they will have the Catholic sense and instinct to guard and withhold them before they get entangled in engagements." [1]

2. The clergy should be *constant and uniform* in their opposition to mixed marriages, and should strive to prevent them by advice, by exhortation, and even at times by stern rebuke. *Praxis uniformis . . . impediendi totis viribus . . . ne hujusmodi conjugia ineantur.*[2] Hence they should in every lawful way promote intercourse and reunions amongst Catholics. They have not done so enough in the past, and "in consequence," remarks Dr. Smith, speaking of the United States, "it is possible to find in the same town two Catholic communities so far apart in love and thought that it is easier for their young men and women to marry non-Catholics than to marry into the other community."[3]

3. Priests should remember that weighty (canonical) reasons are required to justify papal or episcopal dispensation in case of a mixed marriage. They should not minimize those reasons nor acknowledge their existence in a particular case without

[1] *Ecclesiastical Discourses.*
[2] Third Council of Baltimore, n. 133. [3] *The Training of a Priest.*

careful investigation. Very rarely will the advantages likely to accrue from a mixed marriage at all equalize the risks and losses that are almost always inevitable. Hence, as some of the Popes tell us, the Church hardly ever grants a dispensation except with the utmost reluctance. Of course the character of an individual and the peculiar circumstances of a locality may sometimes diminish the dangers, but, as a rule, a mixed marriage is calculated to destroy conjugal felicity, to undermine the faith of parents and children, and to deteriorate their morals.[1]

4. When a mixed marriage has taken place it is the duty of the local clergy—*parochi gravi conscientiae onere se gravari sciant*—to see, as far as circumstances allow, that the promises made by the contracting couple are faithfully carried out.[2] With this view a friendly visit from time to time is advisable. Such a visit will sustain the Catholic in her religion, and remind the non-Catholic of the solemn undertaking given at the time of marriage. It will manifest an interest in the family and the children, and it will afford a zealous, tactful priest many an opportunity of removing errors and prejudices, and of explaining the true faith in all its reasonableness and attractiveness.

5. A mixed marriage is subject to several restrictions. It must not take place in a church or in a sacristy. There must be no religious rites, no sacred vestments. The priest's presence is almost purely

[1] From a computation recently made in the United States it appears that 66 per cent. of the children of mixed marriages have no religion whatsoever.

[2] Third Council of Baltimore, n. 133.

passive. We say *almost*, for since the new law, *Ne temere*, came into force, a priest is always bound to ask and receive the consent of the contracting parties—*requirere et excipere consensum contrahentium*.[1] He brings the contracting parties to the presbytery, or to some other place apart from the church, and merely witnesses their matrimonial agreement. In some places, however, a Bishop may, for special reasons, permit the marriage to take place in a sacristy or in a private oratory, and to include the blessing of the ring, and even additional religious rites. But neither the nuptial Mass and blessing, nor any other Mass as part of the marriage ceremony, is ever allowable. *Prohibetur quaelibet missa quae haberi posset tanquam complementum ceremoniae matrimonii*.[2]

Moreover, a Catholic must on no account contract before a non-Catholic minister who is acting in his religious capacity. To do so would be an act of treason. It would be crossing over to a hostile camp, and paying homage to the officers of the enemy. Such disloyalty would deserve the punishment appointed by the Church—exclusion from her fold and from the privileges of membership.

The common law of the Church does not prescribe that the promises given by the parties to a mixed marriage should be in writing. The Ordinary of the diocese ought, however, to satisfy himself that they are likely to be fulfilled. This he cannot always do without the addition of an oath, or at least of a written undertaking. The following is a sample of a

[1] S. Cong. Conc., July 27, 1908.
[2] S. Officii, January 17, 1877. Gasparri, n. 463.

promise made use of in some American dioceses, and subscribed by non-Catholics :—

> I, the undersigned, not a member of the Catholic Church, wishing to contract marriage with....., a member of the Catholic Church, propose to do so with the understanding that the marriage tie is indissoluble, except by death, and promise on my word and honour that..... shall be permitted the free exercise of religion according to.....belief, and that all children of either sex born of this marriage shall be baptized and educated in the faith and according to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church. And I promise, furthermore, that no marriage ceremony shall take place besides the one before the Catholic Priest.
>
> Signed in the presence of.....
>
> Date.....

Nothing, perhaps, is so injurious to conjugal happiness as prolonged engagements before marriage. Nevertheless, it is extremely difficult for confessors and others to secure the golden mean in this matter. On the one hand, young men are slow to fulfil their promises, and to undertake the responsibilities of a household ; on the other, a young girl cannot always afford to be urgent and exacting. The main point to be attended to is to safeguard meetings between the young of both sexes, to make them open and honourable, and to surround them with such circumstances of time and place as will obviate their worst dangers. *Laxity* in this matter would be *the ruin of purity* and of the barriers that

Engagements

protect it; whereas *rigorism*, treating young persons as prospective celibates, would alienate them from the Sacraments, or strike them dumb in the confessional. Ballerini's principle on the treatment of proximate necessary occasions avoids both extremes, and may be safely followed in dealing with antenuptial meetings and engagements. Mutual knowledge on the part of the sexes is quite reasonable—may we not say even necessary—with a view to marriage. Instead, therefore, of absolutely interdicting meetings between young people, a confessor will rather insist on certain necessary restrictions and precautions. And in doing so he will keep in view local customs and individual circumstances, so that he may not seem to exact more than is strictly obligatory. If he requires too much, if he is too rigorous, penitents are not unlikely to refuse him obedience and to go elsewhere in search of milder casuistry, or to grow dissatisfied with confession altogether and to discontinue its practice. On the contrary, if he insists only on the essentials of Christian conduct, they will have no reasonable cause of complaint, they will promise amendment, they will receive the grace of the Sacrament, they will come back again and again to his friendly counsels, they will be made to realize the necessity of adopting the remedies prescribed for them in case they are not prepared to abandon the occasion of sin altogether; and in this way, it may well be hoped, they will diminish the dangers involved in their conduct, and save themselves from degenerating into *recidivi* or relapsing sinners. Those, however, who, without any adequate reason, go back again and again into the proximate occasion of sin and

neglect the precautions prescribed by a confessor are to be refused absolution, and to be treated as untrustworthy, till they furnish fresh evidence of their sincerity.

In this matter *judicial consistency* is of great consequence. The same principles ought be applied in every tribunal of penance. The absolution that is wisely refused by some ought not be hastily granted by others. Proximate occasions of serious sin, pronounced by some confessors to be easily avoidable, ought not be recklessly dismissed as necessary by others. Passion and custom make many courtships and liaisons commonplace nowadays which are altogether immoral and subversive of Christian continence. How can a minister of Christ extend his tacit approval to such things? How can he dare to enunciate God's reconciliation with one who ventures wantonly on the very verge of the abyss? St. Leonard of Port Maurice[1] does not hesitate to threaten with Divine vengeance those confessors who, under the pretence of gentleness and forbearance (*sub specie et larva benignitatis perniciosae*), dispense absolution with unthinking prodigality, and so work the ruin of the young, and indeed of the whole world (*ruina juventutis, imo mundi universi*). Confessors, therefore, should study carefully and apply with tact and zeal the rules laid down and illustrated by experienced moralists *in re occasionaria*. Knowledge and experience will teach them discretion, and discretion will enable them to realize, first, that, in dealing with the dangers of company keeping, which so fascinates

[1] *Monita Confessariorum*, n. 24.

and blinds adolescents, they must be firm and unyielding in their adherence to Christian ethics, and secondly, that, while recommending when opportunity offers the better, safer and more perfect line of conduct, they must never demand from penitents more than is strictly obligatory.

Promise of marriage

The papal law that came into force on Easter Sunday, 1908, deals not only with the question of marriage, but also with ante-nuptial engagements. It invalidates all bilateral betrothals that are not in writing and properly witnessed. Verbal promises have for the future no binding effect in conscience on Catholics. If two persons wish to enter into a mutual engagement they should sign a written or printed form, in the presence of the Ordinary of the diocese, of their parish priest (the priest who has charge of the district where either of them resides), or of two lay witnesses, and their signatures should be testified to in writing by the witness or witnesses in the case.[1]

Some writers anticipate one good result from pre-nuptial engagements duly carried out, namely, the diminution of hasty marriages and of the domestic discord that follows from them; and hence they recommend priests to encourage written betrothals before marriage. The *American Ecclesiastical Review*[2] published several suitable forms which have been suggested, for the use of the clergy, by a well-known Canonist—Father M'Nicholas, O.P. We append one:—

[1] An additional witness is required if either of those promising marriage cannot write.

[2] February, 1908.

We, the undersigned, being of sound mind and possessing sufficient knowledge of the obligations we are about to assume, do hereby freely and mutually promise to enter into Holy Matrimony before the 10th day of December, 1909.

In testimony whereof, we affix our signatures on this the 15th day of August, 1909.

James Smith, of .....
Mary King, of.....

L.S.

Witness: Wm. Stanson, Parish Priest of.....

A word may be added as to the double registration of marriage required by the new papal law. The parish priest, or the priest who takes his place, is bound to write at once in the marriage register the names of the newly-married couple and of the witnesses, the place and date of the celebration of the marriage, and other details prescribed by the Ritual or by Diocesan Regulation. Moreover, the marriage must be noted in the book of baptisms after the names of those who have been married. And if the parties were baptized elsewhere, an announcement must be transmitted directly or through the episcopal curia to the priest in whose parish the baptism took place.

BOOKS OF REFERENCE:

Instructio Sponsorum (in English).
Mixed Marriages. Lambing.
A Discourse on Mixed Marriages. Ullathorne.
The New Law on Marriage. Clery.
Mixed Marriages. Stolz.
Elements of the Law of Domestic Relations. Browne.
The Ethics of Marriage. Pomeroy.

CHAPTER XI

Munda sit manus quae diluere sordes curat.

THE Sacrament of Penance is a wonderful agency for good. Whatever holiness has been preserved in the Church to our times is to be ascribed in great measure to its influence.[1] It combines the supernatural and the natural—the divine efficacy of Christ with the human help and co-operation of Christ's ministers. It offers the faithful grace and strength in the Sacrament, guidance and sympathy in the person of the priest. Hence Leibnitz said that there is "nothing better, nothing more worthy of the Christian religion" (than the tribunal of Penance), and he looks upon "a pious, grave, and prudent confessor as a powerful agent for the salvation of souls," as one who regulates human affections, obviates the occasions of sin, solves doubts, soothes afflictions, diminishes evils, and, in a word, discharges all the offices of a trusty and disinterested friend.[2] The experience of the Church bears out the observation of this eminent philosopher. Those who go to confession regularly and with proper dispositions never fail to advance in virtue.[3] In fact attachment to serious sin is incompatible with

Value of the Confessional

[1] Catechism of the Council of Trent.

[2] *Systema Theologicum*, p. 270.

[3] "Preachers beat the bushes, but confessors catch the birds." —Blessed John Eudes.

absolution. Should a penitent, therefore, show no signs of amendment, what are we to conclude? Either that the penitent is at fault, or that the confessor is not "a faithful friend and a strong defence;" either that the penitent does not come regularly, or that the priest is not a man of prudent zeal for souls. Referring to the latter alternative Canon Oakley remarks, "that in no other department of sacerdotal duty does the success of the priest's ministrations depend more upon his personal sanctification than in all that relates to this marvellous institution of the mercy and providence of our Redeemer." Of similar import are the words of St. Alphonsus: "We are quite certain that sacramental confessions will not produce the fruit which we expect and desire, if they are not heard by upright learned priests, well instructed in the salutary doctrines of the Church." [1]

"Therefore," so runs the Roman Ritual, "in order that a confessor may be able to discharge the functions of judge and physician, that he may be able to discern between leprosy and leprosy, to cure diseases, and to prescribe appropriate remedies, let him labour to acquire ample knowledge and prudence, by unremitting prayer, and by the study of approved authors, especially the Roman Catechism." Let him not assume the purple stole of jurisdiction in any spirit of mere professionalism; let him, like Jesus Christ, make himself holy that his disciples may be made holy; let him clothe himself with the acquirements that

Upright and learned judges

[1] *Praxis Confessarii*, n. 18.

befit the judicial bench; let him be well versed in the laws he administers, and apply them with discrimination; let him propound no doubtful obligations, nor curtail Christian liberty by loose interpretations; let him act with the impartiality and disinterestedness of a judge, taking no gifts in the confessional,[1] showing no preference to rank, wealth, or sex, but rather, like the father of the prodigal, going forth to meet and welcome the wretched, the ignorant, the despondent, the fickle, and the slothful; in a word, let him ever look upon the confessional as the tribunal of Christ, where bruised reeds are lifted up, where smouldering flax is nourished into a living flame, and where frail men are braced with grace and courage to bear bravely the yoke of Jesus Christ.

The duty of interrogating penitents

Before giving absolution, a priest is frequently bound to interrogate his penitents; otherwise he cannot be sure of their fitness. He cannot be sure that they have fully confessed their sins, that they have elicited a sincere act of contrition, or that they have made a firm purpose of amendment. There are penitents who need, just as there are others who wish, to be interrogated. Some are unable either to examine their consciences or to fully explain their sins, especially when they have been a long time away from the tribunal of Penance; others, for one reason or another, are so reticent that unless they are questioned they will depart from the confessional

[1] *Etiam ultro, quocumque nomine, oblata recusent.*—Second Council of Baltimore, n. 289.

with sins or shadows of sin still hovering over their consciences. Hence, as Lehmkuhl puts it tersely, *Confessarius opportuna interrogatione debet supplere, si prudenter judicet a poenitente quaedam dictu vel cognitu necessaria omitti.* If he neglects this duty he ill-treats the Sacrament, defeats the designs of Christ, and leaves wounds festering in many a heart. If, on the contrary, he proposes when necessary a few skilful questions, short, simple, and kindly, he can quickly clear away a host of difficulties and make confession very easy even for those who are timorous and cowardly.

It is a much simpler matter to prove the necessity of putting questions than to explain the method of doing so. No amount of theology can teach a young priest this delicate duty. He may, and indeed he ought, to know thoroughly the ordinary questions that are put to penitents. He ought to have the plan of a general confession committed to memory. But that is not sufficient. He needs discretion, he needs practice, and he needs hints and advice from experienced priests on arriving in the diocese of his future labours.

Method of interrogating

The supreme consideration that modifies the positive law of confession is the spiritual welfare of each individual penitent. On the one hand, a priest must sometimes sacrifice material integrity rather than run the risk of causing formal sin; and on the other, questions, not prescribed by the law of Christ, must be put to penitents in particular cases in order to remove their anxieties. In other words, all who enter the confessional must, as far as possible, be sent

away happier and better than they came. Consequently it is a priest's duty to interrogate carefully those who are unable or unwilling to explain themselves, that is, practically all those who are badly-instructed, timid, or reticent. When he has finished his examination, if they are still anxious to enter into details, into the aggravating circumstances of certain sins, he ought say to them :—

"Now, I have asked you all that is necessary. Our Lord does not require any more. He commands only what is morally possible for each individual. But to relieve your mind I have asked you, or I will ask, this other question, though it is not necessary : 'Were those acts you mention very bad, more wicked and ugly than usually happens ?' Are you satisfied now ? Is there anything else weighing on your mind ? If so, tell me, and I will help you."

In dealing with delicate matters, with the virtue of purity, a confessor should proceed with great modesty and discretion, advancing cautiously from general questions to more particular ones, from lesser to greater offences, from evil imaginations and desires to improper actions. *De peccatis contra sextum praeceptum, non raro necesse erit poenitentes, praesertim muliebris sexus, examinare, nunquam aliter prae pudore hujuscemodi peccata confessuras. In hoc autem examine confessarius caste et caute procedat ; sensim a cogitationibus simplicibus ad morosas, a morosis ad desideria, a desideriis ad actus minus criminosos ascendendo ; et si illos fateantur ad magis criminosos.*"[1]

Occasionally, however, a confessor may have

[1] Ritual.

reason to reverse this order, and to begin at once with the plainer and more palpable kinds of sins. For instance, there are many penitents who will by no means be scandalized, but rather helped in their subsequent confession, if the priest examines them in the beginning about their external acts. "Were you guilty of any improper actions with yourself or with others?" Again, there are not a few penitents who very probably do not contract the special malice of certain sins which are accurately distinguished in moral theologies, e.g., the special malice of a bad desire as distinguished from a bad thought (*morosa delectatio*), the special malice of an obscene story as distinguished from obscene boasting, etc. *Penitentes multarum specierum, quae a theologis accurate distinguuntur ne confusam quidem cognitionem habent. Idem de numerica distinctione notandum est.*[1] It is clear, of course, that if there is no malice questions would be out of place and even injurious.

A confessor needs great prudence when interrogating concerning violations of holy purity. He has a duty to his sacred character as the minister of a Sacrament, as well as a duty to penitents. Let him, therefore, be reserved and parsimonious in his questions (*parcum gravemque*);[2] let him ask only what is necessary, the kind and number of sins, never the mode of commission; let him warn penitents who are gross or ignorant that the latter detail, even if allowable, is not obligatory; let him beware of lingering beside polluted pools—*adeo foetet palus ista,*

[1] Noldin, *De Principiis*, n. 285.
[2] Segneri, *Instruct. Confessar.*, cap. ii.

ut consultum non sit vel a poenitente vel a confessario, ubi opus non sit, moveri;[1] let him, even while accommodating himself to common intelligences, neither use himself, nor allow others to use, vulgar, coarse expressions; and lastly, let him often ask the Lord to avert his thoughts from vanity and to place a gate of prudence before his lips.

Saepe utile est opportuno tempore exhortationem sincerae confessionis intermiscere.[2] It is very important to inspire penitents with a sense of confidence. This is particularly true in the case of those who come irregularly to confession, also in the case of those who have been long away, and indeed in general whenever there is reason to fear some concealment of sin. Many people are very timid when coming to confession, and not a few are worried about certain details of sin which they are not bound to confess at all. A kind, sympathetic manner puts such persons at their ease, and occasionally a word of encouragement may be reasonably expected from a confessor. "What a relief it is to tell one's sins to a friend who will never think or speak of them, to a priest who knows human frailty, and hears so many sins in the confessional! What peace comes to the soul after confessing all! With what a light, brave heart you will leave the confessional! If you wish I will question you, and ask you all that you are bound to tell. But, if you prefer, I will let you go on in your own way, provided you tell what ought to be told, and you omit what ought to be omitted."

[1] Segneri, *Instruct. Confessar.*, cap. ii.
[2] Lehmkuhl, ii. 420.

Concealment of sin

Though numbers of Catholics never experience any repugnance or hardship in telling their sins to a priest, we must not shut our eyes to the fact that the law of confession is of its nature very difficult—*unum ex officiis difficilioribus*. Indeed,[1] as the eminent Bellarmine puts it, "If there is anything in the Catholic Church that seems severe and difficult it is doubtless confession. For what is more disagreeable, what more burthensome, than that all men, even the great and powerful, must declare their sins, however secret and shameful, and submit to sentence and punishment at the hands of priests, who are like themselves mere men? So *manifestly hard is the law of confession* that the pastors of the Church would not have dared to introduce it, and would not have been able to induce the faithful to accept and observe it for so many centuries, if it did not rest on divine ordinance and institution."[2] It is not surprising, therefore, that occasionally people are tempted to conceal their sins in confession, and that their lips are at least partially sealed by a sense of shame, by pride and human respect, by timidity and nervousness, or by forebodings of harsh treatment.[3] Many missionaries, amongst them St. Liguori, tell us that the reparation of defective confessions is the *chief fruit of missions*—a fruit which generally lies unnoticed beneath the surface, like precious ore buried in the earth. We should not, however, give too wide an application to observations

[1] Lehmkuhl, ii. n. 475.

[2] *De Poenitentia*, lib. iii. cap. xii.

[3] "It is our disadvantage as priests that we are seldom if ever reminded in our own case of the effects of a repulsive manner in the confessional."—Canon Oakley, *The Priest on the Mission*.

that may be true only of a particular time and country, nor should we imitate those "authors who, generalizing from their own limited experience, *exaggerate the frequency* of sacrilegious confessions."[1]

There are certain precautions which are calculated to lessen the inherent or imaginary difficulties of confession :—

Preventives of concealment

(*a*) "To place ourselves by an effort of the imagination in a position with which we are not personally familiar—I mean the position of a penitent coming for the first time into the presence of a confessor, previously unknown, and almost overwhelmed with the prospect of a confession which fears and scruples invest with a terror not belonging to it. No meditation is so profitable to the confessor as that which brings before him the sense of his own infirmity, because none is so apt to secure a generous and compassionate treatment of his penitents."[2]

(*b*) By catechetical and other instructions to make the faithful understand the *divine limitations* of the law of confession, and so to save them from anxiety and worry about certain superfluous explanations, certain subtle aspects of sin, and the various aggravating circumstances which form neither a necessary nor always a commendable portion of sacramental confession.

(*c*) To *mitigate* in every possible way the hardship of confession, by a kind, sympathetic manner, by not seeming to recognize those who come to confession,

[1] Tanquerey, *De Poenitentia*, n. 210; Genicot, n. 305; Bucceroni, vol. ii. p. 537.
[2] Oakley, *The Priest on the Mission*.

by avoiding familiarity with penitents, by not meeting them before or after confession, by never discussing matters of conscience outside the confessional,[1] by excluding, as far as possible, all matters from the confessional that are not connected with the sacramental act,[2] by shaping questions so that they may facilitate a ready assent rather than provoke an untruthful denial,[3] by suppressing symptoms of surprise, even when the penitent's narrative is apt to shock,[4] by sternly protecting the character of others in the confessional, by shunning all criminal inquisitions as regards a penitent's accomplices, and by not limiting in any way the freedom of penitents to go to whatever confessor they please.

. . . . . .

The duty of exhorting penitents

Do persons come to confession who are unrepentant and unfit for absolution ? Are there instances in which we must distrust a penitent's own testimony ? Are there various cases in which it would be as useless to pronounce the words of forgiveness as it would be to pronounce the form of baptism without water ? Undoubtedly persons do enter the tribunal of Penance altogether indisposed and unconverted—(*a*) sometimes because from want of careful instruction they do *not understand the true interior nature of contrition,* the thorough change of will that it

[1] " Good confessors see their spiritual children only in the confessional."—St. Vincent de Paul.

[2] . . . *Muliercularum . . . garrulitatem . . . coerceat.*—Second Council of Baltimore, n. 281.

[3] If a confessor hurries penitents at their confession, or too readily presumes their innocence (" You weren't guilty of such a sin "), he is likely to tempt them into insincerity.

[4] *Mirantis aut horrescentis animi nulla indicia prodat.*—Second Council of Baltimore, n. 280.

implies; (*b*) at other times because, though perhaps fully aware of the necessity and nature of true sorrow, they act with levity and negligence; or (*c*) finally, because they have *no firm purpose of amendment*, being the vassals of Satan, the willing bondsmen of some bad habit, some evil association, or some proximate occasion of sin. In all such cases as the foregoing how is the confessor to act? Is he to pronounce an empty formula over unreal penitents, and to delude and salve their torpid consciences with a mock reconciliation? Is he to dismiss them and tell them to return when they have corrected their ignorance, their levity, or their hardness of heart? Or, rather, is it not his duty to awaken in them the necessary dispositions, to stir up that true sorrow, that purpose of amendment, which alone can justify unconditional absolution? Is it not better to hear two confessions well than twenty carelessly and superficially?[1] better to take time and patience than to turn the tribunal of Penance into a couch for sinners? The faithful never find fault with a zealous, painstaking confessor; they know from experience with what care he searches out the latent sources of sin, with what skill and sympathy he gives advice and encouragement, with what efficacy he touches the hardest hearts.

Efficacy of exhortation

And what the faithful learn from experience is confirmed by the solemn teaching of the Supreme Pastor. In the Bull *Charitate Christi* (1825), Leo XII teaches, first, that persons "who come to confession altogether unprepared" (that is, unwilling to amend their

[1] Cajetan.

lives) "may be converted," and made fit for absolution, "if priests clothe themselves with the tender mercy of Jesus Christ and treat sinners with zeal, patience, and meekness;" and, secondly, that "if priests neglect to do so, if they have no wine and oil for the sick and wounded" (for whose special help they are deputed) "they must be judged more *unfit* to hear confessions than others are to make them." St. Liguori's opinion coincides with this authoritative teaching. "Many," says he, "who come to the tribunal of Penance indisposed may be disposed, by making them realize the ugliness of sin and its awful consequences, and by awakening in their hearts a spirit of prayer, and of confidence in God's co-operation." "If," argues Berardi,[1] "a few words of the prophet Nathan were enough to inspire David's mournful 'Miserere,' why should not the short but fervent appeal of a priest touch hearts that are not torpid, and infuse an adequate aversion from sin in all those penitents whose chief fault is heedlessness?" Indeed, it is only in rare instances, in the case of certain cowardly and despondent spirits, that a prudent, compassionate priest, with the charity of God abiding in him, will fail to arouse, by exhortation, sufficient remorse and contrition for the worthy reception of absolution. An exhortation, however, to be effective must be pointed, practical, and fervent. It must not be vague, or theoretic, or half-hearted. It must be the breath of God's Spirit, pleading, persuading, captivating. It must not be couched in lazy propositions, it must rather pour

[1] *De Recidivis*, vol. i. n. 119.

itself forth in *questions*—pithy, trenchant, homely questions, that will hold fast the attention, grip the conscience, stimulate the will, and, with motives and illustrations, press home the need as well as the facility of conversion. The subjoined are a few examples, taken mainly from Salvatori's *Instructions for a New Confessor* :—

Examples of exhortation

(*a*) *Those in general who are hardened, weak, or cowardly.*—If a person makes a promise, what is he expected to do ? Have you tried to keep your promises ? If a man is sorry for offending another will he go and offend him again next day ? Are not those ugly sins ? Would you not like to give them up ? Could you expect to enter Heaven with them ? Does not a man dress himself becomingly before paying a visit to a friend ? Will you not throw off those ugly garments ? For what company are they fit ? Does not Jesus invite you to His Banquet ? Will you not put on a white robe ? Did Jesus ever harm you ? Is He not friendly to publicans and sinners ? Does He not invite the heavily-laden ? If you love Him like Magdalen will not all your sins be wiped out ? Is He not here on the altar ? Will He not love you when others forget you ? Who has given you as much as He ? Will you not begin now ? Will you not turn towards the Lamb of God ? Do you say you cannot break off this attachment ? Could you if this person began to love another ? Could you if this person actually loves another ? Could you if this person were struck with vile disease or with death ? Is not your affection, therefore, capable of change ? Why love what is inconstant, frail, perhaps

even sinful? Who is good but Jesus? Who is beautiful but Jesus? Who is constant but Jesus?

(*b*) *Holy Purity.*—Are not these things wrong? Would you let a friend, a mother, see them? Are you not ashamed of your guardian angel? Are not all things naked in the sight of God? Does not Jesus come into your breast? Does He not see your heart and thoughts? Did you ever look at Him in the courtyard naked and scourged? Was not His gentle body mangled for ugly sins? Who loves you most in the world? Who has given you most proof of love? Who will come to you in Holy Communion? Where will vile sins bring a person? Can you be pure without God's help? Will you not ask Him to hasten to help you? Will you not touch the hem of Jesus' garments? Will you not cry out: "O God, create in me a clean heart"?

(*c*) *Forgiveness.*—Would you oblige a friend? Would you refuse me a little favour? Would you refuse Jesus something? What more could He do for you than He has done? Have you ever treated Him badly? Have you ever betrayed Him? Has He forgiven you often and much? Has He forgiven you ten thousand talents? And will you not oblige Him now? What does He say from the crucifix? Will you not repeat His very words? Will you not say: "Forgive them, Father"?

(*d*) *Sins of the Tongue.*—Would you take what belongs to another? Would you put your hand in his pocket? Is not his good name more precious than his purse? How would you feel yourself towards a blackener of your character? Is not stolen character to be restored as well as ill-gotten

goods ? Is restitution easy ? Why do you swear rashly and call on sacred names ? Does it strengthen a man's word ? Would you let your mother's name be bandied about ? Would you call on a decent person to go security for what's wrong and sinful ? And why summon Jesus ? Would you throw mud on the name of your dearest friend ? Would you allow the Blessed Sacrament to be cast in a dirty place ? Would you soil the paten ? Does not Jesus rest on your tongue ? Will you not keep it clean ? Will you not keep it truthful and honourable ? Will you not keep it from bad talk ? Will you not keep if from your neighbour's character, as you keep your hand from his pocket ? Is not the tongue an unquiet evil, full of deadly poison ? Is it not perfection to keep it in check ? Do you bow at the name of Jesus ? Will you say from your heart : " Hallowed be Thy Name " ?

(*e*) *Diffidence in God. Repining at Misfortunes.*— Is man's life on earth a certain possession ? Is the strongest sure of a day ? If sinners prosper, what matter ? But are the prosperous really happy ? Is there peace for the wicked ? May not a humble man be happier than the rich and mighty ? Will he not take his rest sweetly whose conscience reprehends him not ? Is it not better to die than lead a bad life ? Were not the martyrs glad to die ? Did they not long to be in a better land ? Were they not innocent, and yet put to death ? Was not Jesus most innocent, and yet the Man of Sorrows ? Was He not calumniated and called names ? Will you find such comfort anywhere as in the crucifix ? Does it not solve every difficulty ? If God is with us,

what matter who is against us ? Can you not do all things with His help ?

. . . . . .

Any ignorance or error that is inconsistent with a true reconciliation with God must be removed before absolution is given. Apart from this general principle it is not easy to decide how much instruction may be necessary or advisable in particular cases. Of course the tribunal of Penance is not to be converted into a catechism class, and therefore in the case of penitents unacquainted with the doctrines and duties of the Christian religion it is generally best to induce them to attend sermons, to read religious literature, to associate with well-instructed Catholics, and to pray unceasingly for an increase of the supernatural gift of faith. Isolated and particular misconceptions should, however, be dealt with and corrected in the confessional, at least in so far as they are injurious to the penitent or the public good. For instance, children, and others too, should from the beginning be guarded against the sense of discouragement which results from confounding temptations with sins, indeliberate with malicious actions,[1] and lesser faults and imperfections with serious transgressions. Any tendency in a penitent to develop an evil habit, no matter how unconscious, ought to be prudently checked at once. How often have the uncorrected faults of childhood—thefts, lies, meannesses, improprieties—grown robust and noxious with advancing years !

Errors of penitents : their correction

Sometimes it becomes clear in the course of con-

[1] *In maledictis, blasphemiis et peccatis internis saepe abest plenus assensus.*

fession that two persons have unwittingly contracted marriage with a diriment impediment. In such a case the practical course is to leave their good faith undisturbed, and to procure a remedy as quickly as possible. Serious consequences, such as scandal, quarrels, disgrace, or incontinence, might easily result from a disclosure of the nullity of the marriage, especially if made to the husband. Should one of the couple, say the woman, come to know that her marriage is invalid, only in an extreme emergency (for instance, to save herself from loss of character) would it be lawful for her to discharge certain duties of the married state—*debitum reddere*. In such an emergency the purely *ecclesiastical* impediment that originally stood in the way of a valid marriage ceases, according to the teaching of eminent theologians.[1]

Invalid marriage

If a penitent, especially one who is in the habit of receiving Communion, is in error as regards important duties, great scandal might be given and great injury done to the general welfare by allowing such an error to continue, and by thus giving it a quasi-approval. For instance, a prominent citizen who, without any reason or any permission, ignores an excellent Catholic school, and sends his children to a godless one, ought be fearlessly told his duty.

If silence causes scandal

Those, too, who habitually, and without any necessity, read papers or publications which imperceptibly undermine their faith or their morals should be candidly admonished that they are bound to discontinue such reading.

Evil reading

[1] Lehmkuhl, ii. 826; Ballerini-Palmieri, vi. 532.

They who love truth and innocence will not recklessly expose such treasures to serious peril.

Reticence the exceptional course

If penitents who are fairly good and anxious to frequent the Sacraments seem persuaded of the lawfulness of certain acts—such as the non-fulfilment of pious bequests, valid but civilly informal, the excessive use of morphia, the frequentation of scandalous dances and theatres, the use of certain medical remedies in maternity cases, the theory and practice of Malthusianism, and the neglect to denounce solicitation—how are they to be treated? Is the truth to be bluntly put before them, even at the risk of their formal disobedience and of their sinning against the light? First of all, if they expressly request information and guidance, or if their apparent *bona fides* is infected with misgivings, the proper course will always be to tell them the truth. Furthermore, they should under no circumstances be allowed to think that a priest acquiesces in their conduct, and, indeed, *as a general rule,* that conduct ought to be condemned, unless they are very likely to disregard the condemnation. In the case of those who are, or are likely to become, constant penitents a confessor will find it advisable to practise reticence and forbearance for a time, in order to gain their confidence, to attach them to the confessional by kindly sympathy and encouragement, and thus, by a gradual strengthening of motives and dispositions, to lead them to a higher standard of duty.

. . . . . .

However enlightened may be the convictions and

firm the purposes of a penitent in the confessional they are exposed to many vicissitudes. They are exposed to the gusts of passion, to the seductions of evil influence, to the tyranny of bad habits, and to the very mutability of the human will. "O how great is man's frailty, always prone to vice. To-day he confesses his faults, to-morrow he commits them again. Now he resolves to take care, and in an hour's time he acts as if he had never resolved." [1] A confessor must therefore try to secure the progressive improvement of his penitents. As a physician of the body, besides affording temporary relief to a sufferer, searches out the hidden causes of sickness and prescribes remedies and preventives for the future, so in like manner the physician of the soul must not be satisfied with the soothing of a troubled conscience; he must with patience and discernment diagnose the lurking maladies of the heart, unravel its folds and windings, lay bare its predominant tendency, and suggest precautions against future relapse. He must discriminate between penitent and penitent, and apply to each case the principles of the spiritual life, sometimes explaining the strict letter of the law, sometimes recommending the things that are of counsel.

Priest as physician

The rights and duties of a confessor must never blind him to the rights of a penitent. A confessor is entitled, indeed, both as judge and physician, to interrogate, to grant, refuse, or postpone absolution, according to the circumstances of each case, and to prescribe all that may be necessary for a penitent's

[1] *Imitation*, bk. i. chap. xxii.

amendment. But outside these matters, outside whatever is connected with the due administration of the Sacrament, he possesses no authority to impose an obligation. He may, and often does, give spiritual advice or direction; but he expects no unreasoning dependence on the part of penitents. He respects their personal responsibility and freedom. He does not force his views upon them. He encourages them to exercise their own faculties, to pray for prudence, and to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In giving his assistance he always acts as a mother who trains a child to walk by itself, or as a teacher who teaches a pupil to think independently. In a word, he steers a middle course between the two extremes of too little and too much—he gives spiritual direction if it is likely to advance penitents on the way of perfection, and he carefully avoids over-direction, which, as Father Faber tells us, has done damage to many souls.[1]

Whenever, therefore, he is asked such questions as the following: "Father, does the law of charity oblige me to be on speaking terms with such a one? Is it sinful to omit my prayers? Am I bound to follow my parents' advice in choosing a partner for life? May I have frequent meetings with a person of the opposite sex?" he considers, first of all, what is most salutary for each particular penitent, and recommends the way of perfection, the better course, if it is at all practicable, at all likely to be followed. In effect he says: "Be generous with your Saviour. Do not calculate too precisely the lines of duty. Aim

[1] *Growth in Holiness*, chap. xviii.

high. Return full and loyal service for the many gifts you have received."

But if those who consult him wish to know their bare duty, the minimum to which they are obliged, then he puts aside the loftier principles of human conduct and calls to his aid the science of moral theology, the main object of which is to determine as far as possible the boundaries of sin. Guided by this painstaking science he investigates each particular question proposed to him, and, if it seems to admit of solution at once and without consultation, he gives his opinion on the existence and extent of an obligation in such words as the following [1] :—

" I do not think you are strictly bound to speak to such a person for some time, but what was Christ's example on the Cross—what does the crucifix in front of you suggest ? I cannot say that you are bound under pain of sin to say morning and night prayers, but who can call himself a Christian and neglect the one or the other ? You are, indeed, free in the choice of a partner, but reasonable deference is due to the parents to whom you owe so much. Of course, apart even from the ordinary social meetings between the sexes, it is quite legitimate for you to meet a particular person from time to time with a view to matrimony ; but you must admit that great modesty and circumspection are necessary, that meetings should be open and honourable, and that every circumstance should be eliminated which would involve serious danger or discredit to you or to your companion."

[1] *Caveat confessarius aliquid esse peccatum mortale dicere quod certus non est esse mortale.*—Lehmkuhl, ii. n. 475.

We shall conclude this chapter with a few practical rules brought together in a summary way for the convenience of young priests.

Some practical rules

1. Before, as well as after, you enter the confessional make use of prayer and recollection, lest in the words of Père Eudes, you become like a brush which is soiled by cleaning the house. *Fit plerumque ut dum rectoris animus aliena tentamina condescendo cognoscit, auditis tentationibus etiam ipse pulsetur . . . nam dum sordes diluentium suscipit quasi suae munditiae serenitatem perdit.*[1]

2. "Any irregularity in our attendance at the confessional is peculiarly hazardous to the spiritual interests of our people. . . . It costs many a good deal to come to confession at all, and duties which are unpleasant in themselves are those for which we readily take dispensation or seek excuse."[2]

3. As a general rule neither give nor receive money in the confessional. To give creates a temptation and a danger for penitents; to receive is unworthy of a judge. "Presents and gifts blind the eyes of judges and make them dumb in the mouth, so that they cannot correct."[3] Do not, as a rule, receive conscience money; but if, in a particular case, you must become the channel of restitution, obtain a receipt when possible for the debtor.

4. Women should be restrained from prolixity. Some of them are so solicitous about microscopic details that they run a risk of not devoting adequate

[1] *Regula Pastoralis*, p. ii. c. v.
[2] Oakley, *The Priest on the Mission.*
[3] Ecclus. xx. 31.

attention to their contrition and their purpose of amendment; others of them are apt to lose sight of the sacramental character of penance, to seek human sympathy rather than God's grace, and to strive by various arts, such as flattery, to concentrate on themselves the interest and attention of a priest. With such as these latter the usual result for a confessor will be, according to a French author, *lucrum cessans et damnum emergens.*

5. Neither directly nor indirectly curtail the liberty of timid penitents to go to any other confessor. Indeed, it is well on occasions to encourage them to go to another. Remember that sick parishioners may sometimes greatly wish to confess their sins to a stranger.

6. Never discredit the opinions or directions of another confessor; you cannot be sure what he said, especially as penitents are liable to be mistaken in what touches themselves. *Quoad praeteritas confessiones praesume confessarium alterum satisfecisse quoad interrogationes, monita restituendi,* etc., *nisi certo deprehendas eum errasse.*[1]

7. If you must refuse absolution in a particular case do so gently, kindly, regretfully, awakening at the same time gleams of hope and suggesting an early return.

8. A young priest ought to take to heart the words of the Mechlin Synod: "We *strictly* warn confessors *never* to introduce into their ordinary conversation matters heard in confession." *Rigid principles* and *rigid adherence* to them is the only safe course in

[1] Lehmkuhl ii. n. 475.

dealing with the awful secrecy of the confessional. A deliberate violation of the sacramental seal is an unheard of thing within the Church. But the people expect a priest to bury in oblivion everything he hears in the confessional, and they would be shocked and scandalized if they thought that he might ever mention in ordinary conversation, even in a vague, impersonal way, anything that reached him through so privileged a medium.

9. Never discuss spiritual affairs with penitents outside the confessional. Hardly ever ask, or use, a penitent's permission to speak of what is told you in confession, especially as some persons might grant involuntarily what they had not the courage to refuse. The tribunal of Penance should on no account be used as a channel of information. It was instituted to give grace and comfort to sinful man. If indiscreet questions are put to you about a penitent—for instance, if some one in anxiety asks you about a parent or friend—be careful not to answer from your knowledge as a confessor.

10. The proper place to hear confessions is the confessional, which ought to be suitably constructed and placed in an *open* and *well-lighted* part of the church. The Cardinal-Vicar of Rome ordered in 1898 that a close, fixed, grating should separate priest and penitent, and that in the case of institutes for women there should be, moreover, a permanent veil over the grating.[1] Whenever a confession is heard elsewhere, it ought to be surrounded and safeguarded with as much decorum and reverence as possible.

[1] Vide *Acta S. Sedis*, vol. xxxi. p. 24.

Volumus ut nunquam confessiones mulierum in privatis sedibus, nisi per crates interpositas, et in loco patenti, quantum per loci rationem licebit, excipiantur.[1]

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[1] Second Council of Baltimore, n. 24.

CHAPTER XII

Cum pueris debet adhibere confessarius omnem charitatem et modos suaviores.

Children and Confession

No one can prepare children for confession as well as a priest.[1] He speaks with the authority and kindness of a father; and he is much more likely than others to present a truthful and attractive picture of the confessional. He explains—not once only but many times—the secrecy and sacred character of the seal, the true nature of sorrow, the strength imparted by absolution, the comfort of having a friend in temptations and difficulties, and the fact that a priest as a rule neither knows penitents nor remembers what they tell. He carefully distinguishes in broad outline temptation and consent, graver and lesser transgressions; he recommends the confession of venial sins and of temptations, with a view to help and guidance, and, instead of allowing children to *perplex* themselves with the examination of conscience usually found in prayer-books, he repeats for them aloud, or writes on a black-board, an appropriate review of a child's conscience, formulates a probable confession or two from beginning to end, and gets the children to join with him in short, fervent acts of contrition. *Nec unquam Catechista omittat eos iterum*

[1] Consult Gerson, *De Parvulis trahendis ad Christum;* Reuter, *Neo-Confessarius*, nn. 99-118; Mother Loyola, *First Confession.*

iterumque hac de re breviter et summarie edocere antequam confiteantur.[1] By such skilful instruction, children, even the timid and the sinful, come to realize that confession, far from being as difficult and disagreeable as the imagination had painted it, is really a solace to the tempted, and a tower of strength to those who have fallen. Everyone of experience knows that in childhood are sown the seeds of virtue or of vice, and that great watchfulnesss and great graces are needed to moderate the lusty energies of youth and to nourish into maturity such delicate virtues as modesty, veracity, and respect for the rights of others. At no time is a soul's friend more necessary than in the years of childhood and adolescence. Kegan Paul in his *Memories* complains bitterly that in Protestantism a child's soul is for the most part left to shift for itself and " for the most part fares badly." " When an English lad ceases to say his nightly prayers at his mother's knee, there is no one to force on him the connection between religion and morals ; no one, except from the distant pulpit, ever speaks to him of his soul, no one deals with him individually or helps him in his special trials. A father is, as a rule, shy of his son. . . . So that the boy's soul shifts for itself. . . . I can truly say that for the five years I was at Eton, between the ages of thirteen and eighteen, no one ever said a word to me about my own religious life, save always my mother, but she could know nothing of a boy's dangers, and was as one that fought the air."

In the confessional itself " a confessor must expend

[1] *Instructio Pastoralis Eystettensis*, n. 720.

all his love on the children and treat them with the utmost gentleness." *Cum pueris debet adhibere confessarius omnem charitatem et modos suaviores.*[1] He must be a father, a loving father, to the young, anticipating their difficulties, encouraging them in their trials, teaching them noble examples and *pious practices,* guarding them against evil habits, and awakening in them true contrition. While it is right to inspire children with a horror of all sin, yet it would be unfair and impolitic for priests, parents, or teachers, to create wrong impressions in their young minds, and to lead or allow them to think that a small theft or disobedience, or a petty lie, no matter how often repeated, could kill the soul for all eternity. In other words, a false conscience in children, by which they regard trifles as serious faults and *vice versa,* should be prudently corrected.

No matter how well instructed children may be, some of them will wish to confess their sins from written notes. It would be very injudicious to prevent them from doing so *in actu confessionis* or to prohibit the practice altogether. Their conscientiousness should be encouraged. Later on, however, when they have overcome their early difficulties and acquired a fuller knowledge of confession, they may be advised to adopt the ordinary way of telling their sins. Whether children make use of notes or trust to their memory, a priest must often interrogate them at the end of confession; many of them are unable to explain themselves fully, and, moreover, they all expect that questions will be put to them.

[1] St. Liguori, *Homo Apostolicus,* tract. ult.

But those questions must be few and discreet; they must not be such as will excite curiosity or suggest matters which it is the privilege of youth and innocence to be ignorant of. "Did you disobey your parents? Quarrel with others? Tell lies? Say or do anything improper or naughty? Neglect your prayers or Mass? Take what belonged to others or injure them?"[1]

Furthermore, children ought to be encouraged from an early age to come *regularly* to confession. It would be unjust and Jansenistic to put them back till their first Communion. Hence Pius IX, "knowing that the *frequent* use of the Sacraments of Penance and of the Eucharist contributes wonderfully to foster the dawning piety of the young . . . entreats the Bishops of France to exercise their influence and authority in putting an end to a custom so detrimental and so opposed to the spirit and discipline of the Church as that of refusing absolution till the time of first Communion, or even of postponing it for a considerable period."[2] There are two adequate reasons for familiarizing children with the confessional as soon as they come to the use of reason: first, it gives them a facility in disclosing their difficulties and temptations to a prudent friend; and secondly, and above all, it plants in their virginal souls the seedlings of virtue and of truth.

Faults are apt to occur at any early age which, when multiplied, develop into evil habits, and which are sometimes grossly exaggerated by an erroneous

[1] *Caveat Confessarius ne nimius sit in examinando ne pueri concipiant horrorem confessionis.*—Reuter, *Neo-Confessarius*, n. 102.
[2] Letter of Cardinal Antonelli, March 12, 1855.

conscience or by indiscreet parents and teachers. Children, therefore, have need of penance and absolution, so much so, indeed, that many authors allow them to be absolved as often as they confess—*toties quoties*—provided there is fair ground for believing in their good dispositions—*spes praesentis dispositionis.*[1]

A certain amount of levity and restlessness is no argument against the proper dispositions of a child. Temperament must be taken into account and pharisaic externalism must not be treated as a substitute for true interior and unaffected piety. Even on the day of Communion, says Father Cros, S.J., the exuberant hilarity of children must not be suppressed, nor long prayers and heavy burdens imposed upon them.[2] Christ's yoke is sweet, His affection for children well attested. It would be wrong, therefore, to refuse the grace and comfort of absolution to those who, by their pliancy and innocence, are particularly dear to Him and particularly susceptible to His influence. Their hearts, having no attachment to sin, are easily touched by the great truths, the hope of Heaven, the gratitude we owe to God, the love of Jesus, and the picture of His sufferings. It is not difficult to move children to sorrow, says Berardi—*facillime flectuntur ;* almost as soon as they think of confession they are pricked with remorse, says Ballerini.[3] What blessings and rewards, consequently, may not a priest anticipate for himself and for his people if, besides establishing frequent

[1] Reuter, *Neo-Confessarius*, n. 105 ; Croix, n. 1797.
[2] *The Confessor after God's own Heart*, p. 274.
[3] Berardi, *De Recidivis*, nn. 201-205 ; Frassinetti, diss. 15 § 4.

confession for children after their first Communion, he attracts the uncommunicated every month, or at least four times a year—*saltem quater in anno*[1]—to the tribunal of Penance.

Deputetur tempus speciale (cum caeteri fideles non concurrant ad tribunal) pro confessionibus discipulorum scholarum diurnarum. Seorsim omnino et, quantum fieri potest, diverso tempore pueri et puellae ad hoc congregentur, pauci simul ne taedium generetur—et quidem in Ecclesia, nisi alius locus ab Archiepiscopo designetur.[2] *Singulis mensibus determinetur dies ad confessiones parvulorum audiendas et quatenus fieri possit hae confessiones ante noctem excipiantur.*[3]

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[1] *Instructio Pastoralis Eystettensis*, n. 720.
[2] Synod. Dioc. Westm., iii. c. 3, n. 22.
[3] Synod of Maynooth (1900), xvi. 134.

CHAPTER XIII

Veri fideles qui totam vitam suam ad emendationem disponunt.

In this chapter we shall call attention very briefly to the leading principles of the spiritual life, in order that young priests may be induced to study them adequately in ascetical theology, and, as a consequence, may be qualified to give sound advice to all classes in the confessional.

1. Spiritual growth is gradual, slow, and often tedious. Man must work out his salvation by degrees, with many a sigh and many a disappointment. The fervours of youth and conversion are soon followed by a period of weariness and plodding perseverance. For years the soil is dug, nourished, watered, the vine pruned and sheltered; and yet after long waiting the promises of the spring may yield more foliage than fruit. In the spiritual as in the natural order, darkness alternates with sunshine, illness with health, adverse currents with favouring winds and tides. "As long as man lives he is subject to change even against his will; so that he is at one time joyful, at another sad; one day at peace, another agitated; to-day devout, to-morrow tepid; to-day earnest, to-morrow slothful; to-day serious, to-morrow dissipated."[1] It is necessary, therefore, to realize that

Spiritual growth is slow

[1] *Imitation*, bk. i., chaps. xi., xxii.; bk. ii., chaps. xx., xxv., xxxiii.

there is always a law in the members fighting against the law of the mind, and that as long as we carry about a frail, corruptible body we cannot be without sin, weariness, and sorrow.

> "For Thou wouldst have us linger still
> Upon the verge of good or ill,
> That on Thy guiding hand unseen
> Our undivided hearts may lean." [1]

2. It is most important to realize that true virtue, true spirituality, consists neither in devotional practices nor in pious emotions, but in the faithful fulfilment of one's *daily duty*. "There's life alone in duty done." The busy man struggling to support his family may please God as certainly, though in all probability not as fully, as the cloistered contemplative. The heart that is dry and desolate may be more loyal than one that is borne forward by sensible consolations and happy personal dispositions. All men, high and low, are appointed to go and bear fruit, that is, to practise thoroughly and whole-heartedly what Sir Thomas More calls the simple "plebeian virtues—the lowly humble things which are common to the whole Christian people."

Plebeian virtues

> "One's life may be a glorious hymn,
> An ever-chanted song,
> Though little things and weary toil
> May fill it all day long."

3. The test of true spirituality is given by Holy

[1] *The Christian Year.*

Writ. It is the observance of the Commandments. Love is proved by deeds. Not the hearers of the law, but the doers, shall be justified. "What are all devotions—rosaries, novenas, benedictions, visits, processions, pilgrimages, feast days and functions—worth unless we do our duty and live a true Christian life? What are they but a pretence of virtue—leaves without fruit, and who cares for leaves only?" Religion must influence the daily life, transform the character, and infuse supernatural principles. It must leaven all our actions. It is not something superficial, a mere accident to be thrown around us on sacred festivals and in the church, and to be discarded at other times and elsewhere. It is an interior, divine principle, manifesting itself by *honourable* conduct. True Christians are amongst the best *citizens* of the commonwealth. The men are manly and trustworthy, just in their dealings, temperate in their lives, faithful to their duties, and kindly towards their neighbours. The women, modelling themselves on the Virgin Mary, live up to their high vocation as wives and mothers, exercise a salutary influence in the domestic and social circle, and reflect credit on the religion they profess and on the guides who direct them.

The test of spirituality

4. Spiritual progress depends very much on the formation of *good habits*. "C'est grace à l'habitude que l'homme peut courir au lieu de ramper, que la vertu s'acquiert, qu'en toutes choses le progrès s'accomplit." People must be induced to concentrate their attention on some one fundamental virtue, to meditate on it,

Formation of good habits

to desire it ardently, to pray for it unceasingly, to labour for it patiently, and to be satisfied with slow progress. He who is faithful in small things will be faithful also in what is greater; he who perseveres will be crowned with victory.

5. Devotions are helpful and even necessary; for without them the spiritual life would soon languish and die. Without the Mass we should forget the divine atonement of Calvary; without confession we should live in sin; without the Eucharist we should faint by the wayside; without indulgences we should make little reparation for our transgressions; without holy symbols and images we should think rarely of things spiritual and divine. But in selecting devotions we must neither supplant what is essential nor *unduly multiply* what is merely accidental. We must not "pass over the great mysteries of religion for devotional practices that appeal more directly to the senses. . . . Much injury has been done to souls, both within and without the Church, by a *neglect of what is solid and fundamental*,"[1] and by a frivolous pursuit of what is novel. Such neglect has "generated a superstitious and foolish type of character, lacking depth and strength," and, as a consequence, has "alienated many from the Church, which they say is a nursery for women and children."[2]

Devotions

To know and love our Father, as revealed in the face of nature, in the pages of Holy Writ, and, above all, in the life and teachings of Emmanuel—that is eternal life. Compared with the knowledge, the excellent knowledge, of Christ, all other things are

[1] Cardinal Vaughan, *The Young Priest*. [2] Ibid.

the merest refuse.[1] Hence there is no better way to make men religious than to place before them attractively the *attributes of God*—His wisdom, His power, His lovableness—and thus to familiarize them with noble ideals and lofty principles. "Whatsoever things are true, holy, just, or lovely, let them engage your thoughts," for they speak of God.[2] In like manner all those devotions that place in bold relief the divine attractiveness should get precedence. Such devotions are—the Passion and its daily commemoration, the Sacred Heart[3] and its Eucharistic Presence, and the Holy Family, the three members of which are indissolubly associated in the Catholic conscience. It has been well said that what sufficed to sanctify the Apostles and early Christians should not be neglected or diluted by the faithful of modern times. Yet it does sometimes happen, as we may see with our own eyes, that the great truths of religion are thrown into the shade, that sweetmeats are substituted for solid food, and that pious practices, which are good and lawful in themselves, are rendered enervating and dissipating by their multiplicity and excess.

"Some," says the *Imitation of Christ*, "carry their devotion in books, some in pictures, and some in outward signs and figures. Some have Me in their mouths but little in their hearts. . . . Many run to divers places to visit the relics of the Saints, marvel at the records of their lives, gaze at the noble temples built in their honour, and kiss their sacred bones wrapped in gold and silks. . . . . Oftentimes in those

[1] Phil. iii. [2] Phil. iv. [3] See Dalgairns on *The Heart of Jesus*.

things men are moved with curiosity and the novelty of the sight, and hardly any amendment of life is the result, especially where such gadding abroad is unaccompanied by true contrition. . . . *They* are *Christ's true followers* who lay out their entire life to improvement and amendment." [1]

6. Those who are striving to serve God must be prepared to resist many temptations. Allurements to sin come from within and from without, but, though there may be a "lively fantasy, and even a sense of pleasure," there will be no guilt unless the intellect adverts to sin, and the will consents thereto. And there will be no serious guilt whenever the intellect is blinded by ignorance or passion, or whenever the will, no matter how much it may seem to waver under the violence of temptation, really refuses to surrender.[2] "In nine cases out of ten unhappiness comes from not distinguishing temptations from sins."[3]

Temptations

7. Vigilance, prayer, the frequentation of the Sacraments, and counsel are the chief remedies against temptations of every kind: vigilance, "especially at the beginning of temptation, because then the enemy is most easily overcome"—the longer one hesitates, the weaker grows resistance on the one hand and the bolder grows the assault on the other; *prayer* and the *Sacraments*, because God's aid, without which man is unable to resist even one serious temptation, can be obtained only through the ordinary

Remedies

[1] Bk. iv. chap. i. [2] Reuter, *Neo-Confessarius*, n. 267.
[3] Faber, *Growth in Holiness*.

channels established by Christ; *counsel*, because in temptation we ought to ask advice—*saepius accipe consilium in tentatione*—and because "many souls . . . are kept back or left in perplexity simply for the want occasionally of a little wise and thoughtful guidance, which they seek in vain." [1]

Temptations against holy purity

8. Temptations against holy purity, supplying, as they do, considerable matter for the confessional, demand more than ordinary attention. The best way to keep the mind from being haunted by foul images and suggestions is to occupy it, as far as possible, with pure and wholesome thoughts, or at least with what is harmless. "The tendency of modern moral education is to multiply innocent and beneficent interests, tastes, and ambitions," and so to leave no room in the mind and heart for what is baneful.

It is most important to find out in each case what are the special causes of temptation and sin. In general, the causes are partly internal and partly external. The former may be summed up in one word, concupiscence—that sensual appetite which acts through the nervous organism, and tempts the saint as well as the sinner.[2] The latter are chiefly bad example, evil companions, bad books, idleness, solitude, excitant foods, certain seasons of the year, and occasionally the imprudent questions of a confessor.[2] Now, concupiscence must be weakened by hard work, by moderation in food and drink, by the

[1] Ullathorne, *Ecclesiastical Discourses*.

[2] "Many a trouble of the soul takes its rise from a physical cause that is mistaken for a spiritual one."—Ullathorne, ibid.

[3] Antonelli, n. 522.

avoidance of effeminacy even in trifles, by frank and friendly intercourse with others. Whatever, too, would be likely to upset the nervous system—such as insomnia, dyspepsia, or the excessive use of drugs and stimulants—ought to be carefully guarded against. Moreover, the external occasions of sin must be shunned. No one visits the devil's workshop who disrelishes dealings with him. Intimacies that fear the light, that are not open and honourable, are incompatible with virtue. They taint the soul, and they dry up the affections before marriage can take place. But human precautions alone will not suffice for the acquisition of purity. It must come from above—*desursum est.* It must be asked often and asked fervently. It must be sought through the channels of grace—*ut sublimitas sit virtutis Dei et non ex nobis.*[1]

It is sometimes well, especially after absolution, to warn penitents of the dreadful havoc wrought in body and soul by sinful excesses—to tell them that turpitude brings its own punishment even in this life; but care should be taken not to discredit one's warning by exaggeration, and also not to rob a poor, neglected prodigal of a last remnant of hope which may be his only stay.[2]

BOOKS OF REFERENCE:

Imitation of Christ. à Kempis
Introduction to a Devout Life. St. Francis of Sales.
Christian Perfection. Rodriguez.
Growth in Holiness. Faber.
The World in which we live. Meyer.

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[1] 2 Cor. iv. 7.
[2] Consult Eschbach, Antonelli, Surbled, Noldin, Stall, St. Francis of Sales.

CHAPTER XIV

Infirmatur quis in vobis?

Visitation of the sick

JESUS CHRIST came and dwelt amongst us to heal the sick, to take on Himself our infirmities, to bear the burden of our diseases—in a word, to be our Physician. He went round towns and villages, not only proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom, but also curing every human malady. He commissioned His apostles to do in like manner, giving them at the same time authority over wicked spirits and power to cure all kinds of illness. In His description of the final Reckoning He emphasized the importance of caring the sick: "Those who visit one of the least of My brethren, when sick, will have enduring life, but those who neglect one of them, however lowly, neglect Me and will go into everlasting punishment." The Ritual of the Church repeats and renews Christ's commission. It orders a pastor "*not to wait to be called,* but to go of his own accord as soon as he hears that one of the flock is ill, and to go, too, not once, but *often,*" that is, in proportion to the needs of each case—*saltem singulis hebdomadis.*[1] Hence "a pastor shall urge the people to give him notice as soon as anyone falls ill in the parish, more especially in case the illness should be of a rather serious character.

[1] Synod of Maynooth (1900), n. 147.

As the disease grows worse, he shall visit the patient *more frequently*, and shall not cease to keep diligent watch over his or her spiritual safety. And he shall take care to be present, if possible, at the *hour of death*," in order to strengthen the struggling spirit and commend it into the hands of God and of His angels.

No one can be surprised at the extreme solicitude of Christ and the Church for the welfare of the sick. Supreme issues depend upon the death-bed. An immortal soul passes out of life, and its fate for all eternity will be decided by its attitude at the time of departure. As the tree falls so will it lie. And yet, though people generally die as they live, sickness often brings great perils for the good and special graces even for the wicked. Few, says *The Following of Christ*, are made better by it; and an experienced priest, accustomed to diagnose different cases, will readily realize that illness indeed "maketh the soul sober" and imparts a lowly sense of dependence, but that its general trend is towards dullness of mind, depression, despondency, and extreme sensitiveness.[1] Hence, if ever, the Sacraments—those channels of grace, strength and comfort—are of the utmost value and necessity in the trying time of sickness and enfeeblement. Even the best need, like athletes, to be anointed for the final wrestle; their sinking hearts must be braced with courage, their patience sustained with sympathy and hope. If any die neglected, if dying hearts are not touched, if the sick-room ceases

[1] "The visitation of the sick requires at our hands the greatest patience, forbearance, and self-denial."—Canon Oakley, *The Priest on the Mission*.

to be "the chief arena of sacerdotal activity," the priest will be faithless to his mission, his power to cure will lie barren, his own heart will freeze and harden.[1] There is no field of the ministry that yields so rich and ripe a harvest as the vigilant care of the sick. It brings blessings to the priest, credit to the Church, and comfort to the flock. Happy is the sympathetic, merciful priest. His people confide in him, turn to him in all their crosses, and hope to be comforted by him at the hour of death; in the evil day God shows him the same measure of mercy that he showed to others; and even the world in his case grows prodigal of love and admiration. If the clergy of the Catholic Church are never afraid to face disease in the humblest hovel, never dismayed by fever or pestilence, always willing to surrender their ease and even their lives on behalf of the flock, it is, and ever will be, because they have no human ties or interests to chain them, because their only aim in life is to gain souls, because they count one soul, the soul even of a Lazarus, more precious than all the pride, power, and wealth of nations. What are all things but the merest refuse, says St. Paul, compared with the exceeding value of knowing the Lord Jesus Christ, and of winning the prize of the heavenward vocation which God hath given to all men through Him? What doth it profit a priest to gain the whole world if he suffer the loss of one soul, if he proves a hindrance and a stumbling block to one of the lowly ones who believe in Christ?

[1] *Si per culpam tuam una anima damneretur, tibi malediceret in aeternum.—Memoriale Vitae Sacerdotalis.*

"Who in the winter's night,
Soggarth aroon,
When the cold blast did bite,
Soggarth aroon,
Came to my cabin door,
And on my earthen floor,
Knelt by me, sick and poor?
Soggarth aroon!
Och! you, and only you,
Soggarth aroon."[1]

Antecedently to a sick-call

There are certain general principles which should guide a priest previously to the actual occurrence of a sick-call. The people should be carefully and *annually* instructed in their duties to the sick, and more especially to the dying. These duties consist in giving due and early notice to the priest, in making the requisite preparations for the last Sacraments, in giving some spiritual aid to the patient, and more particularly in assisting him or her to elicit acts of love and contrition. Very frequently Catholics, no less than others, enter eternity unaided by God's minister, or, as it has been said, "unhouseled, unappointed and unanealed." Hence it is of far-reaching consequence for all God's children, Christian and non-Christian alike, to be convinced of the marvellous efficacy and the marvellous facility of an act of perfect love, and still more of an act of perfect sorrow.

The poor malefactor beside Jesus on Calvary was

[1] Banim.

moved to penitence and died a saint, broken and contrite, on the cross. The extortionate tax-gatherer struck his breast, saying: "God be merciful to me a sinner," and went home justified. Magdalen had many sins forgiven her, because she loved much. And David assures us that God will not reject a humble, sorrowing heart. Indeed, if He did, comparatively few would be saved, for a contrite heart—perfect sorrow for sin—has been, through all the countless ages of the past, and is likely to be in the unborn centuries of the future, *the only means of salvation* for millions of the human race. Now, it is reasonable to suppose that such a means is not of its nature very difficult, that God, who "wishes all men to be saved," has placed the plank of safety and reconciliation within reach of all His children. Certainly an act of gratitude or an act of hope is not very difficult; most people are quickly touched by the remembrance of past benefits, or by the prospect of future felicity. Now, so dear to Heaven is the small, sweet voice of gratitude—sweeter than the bees' collected honey—so eloquently does the Sacred Scripture commend man's desire of beatitude—his thirst after the waters that well up unto eternal life—that such writers as Lugo and Suarez are at one with many modern theologians in admitting, as a truly probable opinion, that a turning away from sin or a coming to God, through a sense of the Divine benefits or of the Divine promises, is sufficient to bring down grace and benediction on any human soul. But even though all do not admit this teaching, even though a higher and purer motive should be required for perfect love or perfect contri-

Contrition

tion, it may be safely held that the transition or ascent to that higher motive is not as arduous as many imagine. One who realizes what a benefactor God is—how kind, how generous, how merciful—with what a strong and lavish hand He has beautified and enriched the world—is quickly carried forward from imperfect to perfect love, is quickly heard to exclaim: "O how excellent, how lovable, is this my benefactor! How infinite in amiability! I love Him for His own dear sake." So, too, with Hope. It is akin to charity, only a narrow line divides them. Quickly they unite, and the unselfishness of love takes precedence of the less disinterested disposition of hope. The heart that longs to be dissolved and to be eternally happy with Christ soon discovers that Christ is infinitely lovable, and loves Him accordingly more for His own sake than with a view to future happiness. Thus in the short span of the prayer of prayers one can combine acts of hope and faith, of piety and sorrow, with the lofty aspirations of charity. As Lacroix writes: "If one says the *Our Father* seriously and with attention he *ipso facto* elicits two or more acts of perfect love of God."[1]

If, notwithstanding the instructions and reasonings of a priest, a sick-call comes at an unreasonable hour, postponement will be rarely, anger and abuse never, justifiable. "At whatever hour of the day or night," says the Ritual, "he is called to administer the Sacraments, let him *make no delay* in doing his duty." It is far better to answer many needless calls than to allow one fellow-being to die

[1] Lib. ii. n. 143.

neglected and perchance in a state of guilt. The general public are not good judges of illness—nay, more, they are inclined to exaggerate, especially when they observe the usual symptoms of disimprovement that accompany the growing shadows of the night. Even priests themselves only gradually become experienced judges of the different forms and stages of sickness. And yet a certain amount of general knowledge is not only useful but necessary for them. The significance of pulse and temperature, the signs of approaching death, the ordinary precautions against contagion, the probable duration of certain diseases, the sudden termination of others—these are points that must be observed and attended to, and concerning which a local physician can give considerable information.

Priest and doctor

A priest should be on friendly terms with doctors and hospital authorities, and a doctor on his side would do well to secure the cordial co-operation of the priest. They both meet at the same bedside, they minister to the same individual, and both should know and feel that the interests of body and soul are closely interwoven and can be secured better by mutual understanding than by disjointed treatment. For just as mental gloom or weakness may be alleviated by physical conditions and physical applications, so, too, corporal disease may derive as much relief from the physician of the soul as from the physician of the body. The restless misgivings of a patient, his fear of death, his longing for life, his apprehensions of the future, may be calmed by the sweet influence of religion, and re-

placed by stronger hope and courage than any human means can inspire. The priest should be able, by his words, his character, and his usual method of procedure, to convince the medical attendant or any other person likely to stand in the way of spiritual ministrations that they will cheer the patient and bring peace and comfort to his tossing, troubled mind. The error is far too prevalent that Sacraments received during sickness are "the last Sacraments," and that Extreme Unction can be administered only in "extremity," "on the very brink of the grave"—*opinio improba et insulsissima . . . penitus extirpanda.*[1] The faithful and the public generally should be made to know and see the true nature of sacramental help. An instruction should be given from time to time setting forth the many wonderful effects of Extreme Unction. This Sacrament has been appointed by Christ as the complement of Penance. It cleanses away whatever dregs of sin or of punishment due to sin still linger in the soul. It inundates the fainting heart with confidence in the mercy of God, it banishes disquieting thoughts about the future and the past, it awakens a soothing sense of resignation to the arrangements of Providence, and it gives vigour to the Christian pilgrim for any trials that may yet await him. People are apt to forget that it produces all the foregoing effects in any serious illness long before death is at all certain. Sometimes it even restores bodily health, but, as its efficacy in this respect is not supernatural, as it does not act *per modum miraculi,* but merely co-operates with natural causes,

[1] Second Synod of Baltimore, n. 307.

bodily relief cannot be hoped for whenever the Sacrament has not been administered in good time.[1] Of course cases may occur in which the doctor will be anxious to keep away the thought of death and to retard spiritual aliments till all hope is fled—cases, too, in which his treatment may deflect from the principles of Catholic theology. But as a general rule a priest will do more harm than good by open disagreement and collision. His wisest course will be to win the confidence of the doctor, to gradually correct wrong views,[2] to smooth away difficulties by gentleness, and not to brusquely intermeddle with medical practice. In the rare cases nowadays in which reputable physicians are likely to have recourse to embryotomy, or undue acceleration of birth, it would in all likelihood be both profitless and provocative for a clergyman to interfere. We may deplore and discourage, we cannot always prevent, deviations from the moral order. The practice of destroying consciousness in the agony that precedes death deserves to be condemned. It sometimes involves a risk of salvation, and, even when there seems to be no such risk, even when the last Sacraments have been administered, men ought to be allowed to go forth to meet their God in the full possession of their faculties and in the best dispositions of which they are capable. Nevertheless, a priest can rarely do more than make known his views.

[1] "If the sick do not oftener regain bodily health the explanation is to be found not in the sacramental rite, but rather in *the weak faith of the minister or of the recipient.*"—*Catechism of Council of Trent.*

[2] See *Moral Principles and Medical Practice*, Coppens, S.J. *La Morale dans ses rapports avec la medécine*, Surbled.

A paragraph on the usual safeguards against contagion may be inserted here. Their character will depend, to some extent, on the way in which various maladies are propagated. Some, for instance, are not contracted without actual contact, and hence are strictly contagious; others, again, and indeed a large number, such as small-pox and scarlet fever, communicate their germs through the air to all surrounding objects, and occasionally to a considerable distance. Finally, others, of which typhoid or enteric fever is the most familiar example, spread themselves by an indirect process; the spores of the disease are given off by the dejecta of the patient, but do not become virulent for a day or two, after which they may infect water, milk, drains, closets, etc. As a general rule it is advisable to avoid, as far as convenient, all unnecessary contact with infectious diseases, such as eating and drinking in a house of sickness, inhaling a patient's breath, taking up a position between the sick-bed and the fire, or entering the room before it has been ventilated and put in order. Typhus fever in particular is counteracted by fresh air. The use of a top-coat with a smooth surface, for example, a waterproof, is recommended by some as a safeguard; but perhaps the best course for a priest, not only to save himself but also to give a sense of security to others whom he may have to visit, is to change (and fumigate) his clothes—at least the outer garments—and to have a wash. With a view to the safety of others a priest should also be very careful, when administering the last Sacraments, to use a separate piece of cotton for each unction,

Safeguards against contagion

never to dip his thumb in the oil-stock, and never to bring with him more sacred particles than will be required for the infectious cases he may have to attend. It is well to consult the local physician and to follow his advice. But when all has been said and done in the way of precautionary measures, the fact remains that *the best preventives*, the surest antidotes, are, first, a healthy unreceptive condition of body, not fatigued by excess of labour nor worn out by a long fast; and, secondly, a constant, fearless frame of mind, fortified by a good conscience and by trust in God. "If we live, we live for the Lord; if we die, we die unto the Lord. And, therefore, living and dying we are the Lord's."

During a sick-call

During the actual time of a sick-call there are several minute observances to which a tactful priest will pay attention. He will select a suitable hour for his visit, an hour not likely to inconvenience the household or to be disagreeable to the patient. As a rule the afternoon or close of the day is found to be an appropriate time to drop in, as it were casually, to make a friendly inquiry. The members of a Catholic family are always glad to receive a visit from a priest, and throughout their lives they preserve a grateful remembrance of him if he has been faithful to them in times of difficulty or of sorrow. It is of great importance to win and retain the confidence of the sick person. A famous medical practitioner, asked on one occasion the secret of his wonderful cures, replied: "If my patient likes me, he probably recovers, but if he dislikes me he dies." The same is to a great extent true of the spiritual physician. He must touch the hidden

chords of faith. He must be as one that hath authority. His voice must be gentle, his manner kindly and attentive, his words full of sympathy and not devoid of hope. "Let the priest," says the Ritual, "have in readiness fitting thoughts and, more especially, *telling examples of the saints* with which to comfort, stimulate, and *refresh the sick person.* . . Let him promise a remembrance in the Sacrifice of the Mass and at other times." And let him by other words and acts of kindness render himself and his ministry acceptable. Short, well-chosen texts of Sacred Scripture, simple ejaculations, brief, well-made acts of hope, love, and resignation, especially if incensed on the altar of a fervent priestly heart, will be found far more effective than unfamiliar prayers and protracted exhortations, which are wont to cause weariness and worry.[1] Even though a patient is prepared for the worst, and has "set his house in order," it would be injudicious and often inaccurate to say that death is certain. Why alarm his already fatigued imagination? Why extinguish the last lingering rays of hope, which may relieve many a weary vigil and perhaps retard the fatal issue?

If, as sometimes happens, the Sacrament of Penance is neither necessary nor likely to be palatable to the patient at the first visit, a priest should not insist on it. But its subsequent reception should be recommended as profitable to body and soul, and any aversion that a careless Catholic may feel should

[1] *Expedit ut quivis recens ordinatus sacerdos sibi componat industrias et modos juvandi moribundos et agendi cum aegrotis.*—Lacroix, lib. vi. p. ii. n. 1864.

be deftly dealt with, partly by divesting confession of its real as well as its imaginary difficulties, and partly by obtaining the help of prayers. Occasionally a general or quasi-general review of the past will be expedient or even necessary, for instance, when the confessor learns on inquiry that the penitent's conscience is burthened with some lingering memory from the past, a sin held back through shame, restitution neglected, or an evil habit persisted in. *Quanta vulnera saepius invenies, quae, nisi prudenter extorseris, retinebunt aegroti usque ad mortem.*[1] A priest should spare no pains to make confession under such circumstances as easy and as agreeable as possible. The sick are feeble in mind as well as body, many questions fatigue them, and elaborate exhortations, with pictures of death and hell in the background, unnerve and affright them. Nevertheless, as Canon Oakley reminds us, " it is *very difficult* to make persons in health realize the peculiar trials and distresses of illness " and its peculiar need of sympathy and help.[2] A skilful priest will proportion confession to the capacity of the patient, and in cases of difficulty will manage, by means of a short conversation, a friendly *tête-à-tête*, to secure such a manifestation of conscience as will forestall all objections, and take the place of the formal declaration of sins that forms part of the Sacrament of Penance. A confessor cannot always be content with one confession; a second sometimes, though no doubt rarely, discloses

[1] *Memoriale Vitae Sacerdotalis.*

[2] " The sick can hardly think for themselves. The burden of a suffering body dulls and deadens the mind."—Cardinal Manning, *The Eternal Priesthood.*

a hidden trouble, a latent wound, that disturbs the soul, and needs renewed care and remedies.

No small prudence is requisite in dealing with cases of scandal and of restitution. Of course it is best to insist, where possible, on the discharge of all debts and other duties before death; but sometimes a written or formal promise is all that can be secured; sometimes a clause can be added to a will allocating a certain sum to a faithful friend to be given to creditors, in accordance with the confidential directions of the testator. Occasionally a priest is justified, if not bound, to suggest to a penitent the settlement of his temporal affairs. Further *intermeddling* should be rigorously refrained from. It would expose him to the charge of using undue influence, it would subordinate sacred functions to human ends, it would incense interested relatives and friends. What could be more painful than to see the parting ministrations of religion robbed of their salutary influence on a household by clerical imprudence, or to see a priest, with *Pax huic domini* on his lips, thrusting a rock of scandal recklessly in the path of others? [1]

Temporal concerns of the dying

Just a word as to absolution. Of course children, no less than adults, have a right and often a need to be absolved. Their years, even though under seven, and their seeming innocence are no guarantee against sin, no adequate reason for depriving them of those divinely-appointed helps which cleanse the departing soul from every blemish

Absolution

[1] "Let me urge upon you never, if you can avoid it, to have anything to do with making another's will."—Canon Oakley, *The Priest on the Mission.*

and at the same time increase its loveliness here and its happiness hereafter. Hence, as a general rule, Penance, Extreme Unction and the Viaticum should be administered to children who have reached their seventh year and are in danger of death.[1] In the case of adults, the frequency of absolution will depend mainly on the frequency of the priest's visits—a remark that applies almost equally to the Viaticum. While a person continues conscious he may be absolved as often as by word or sign he indicates a desire of the Sacrament. And when a dying person has lost consciousness, or, to speak correctly, the power of speech and motion, absolution, according to the teaching of St. Liguori, may be repeated three or four times every day, that is, every third or fourth hour, and even oftener if the moment of death is at hand or if the penitent is likely to be persistently assailed by some temptation, such as evil thoughts, hatred towards an enemy, or anger and impatience with God. As we have seen, the Ritual wishes the priest to assist at the last agony.[2] His fervent ejaculations, his solemn words of absolution, are a source of courage and confidence to the poor soul trembling on the brink of the abyss; and his mere presence, as the priest of God, is like a ray of divine comfort piercing through the gloom that envelopes the entire household. When he cannot remain till the end, he ought explain to members of

[1] Lehmkuhl, ii. n. 147.

[2] "I had a dream; yes—someone softly said
'He's gone;' and then a sigh went round the room.
And then I surely heard a *priestly* voice
Cry *Subvenite;* and they knelt in prayer."
—*Dream of Gerontius.*

the family what they should do as death approaches. They should place a crucifix in the hands or before the eyes of the dying person, *gently* sprinkle holy water from time to time, suggest an occasional aspiration, and join together in fervent prayer.

Symptoms of death

The manner of death varies with the individual and with the disease. In many cases life burns out as gradually as a candle. This is particularly true of death from old age or phthisis. First the muscles begin to relax and the sinews to contract, with the result that the chin drops, the eyelids sink, the temples shrink, and all the features become drawn and elongated; then a dusky grey or livid colour spreads over the face, the lips grow dry, the skin is covered with a cold, clammy perspiration, the breathing becomes slow, deep, and irregular, a rattling noise is heard in the throat, and the senses disappear one by one—taste and smell go first, then the sight is dimmed and lost, the power of hearing lingers on almost to the end, and finally the sense of feeling goes last, if it goes at all before death.

Latent life

Father Ferreres, S.J.,[1] who, with the help of a Catholic Medical Society in Spain, has dealt very fully with the question of the actual moment of death, writes as follows:—"Between the moment of death, commonly so called, and the instant at which death really takes place, it is probable that there is *always a period of latent life* (during which the Sacraments may be administered)."

[1] *La mort réelle et la mort apparente.*

This interval of time does not, as a rule, exceed a few minutes, but in certain cases it extends to hours. The vital spark, it seems, continues in the body, even though neither breathing nor cardiac action can be detected by the most skilful physician. Delicate and protracted movements of the heart send out sufficient blood to the nervous system, and, according to some authorities, the cells and tissues continue their functions for a short time, even after the *complete* cessation of breathing and circulation.

The cases likely to afford striking illustration of apparent though not real death are those in which the vital organs—the heart, brain, or lungs—have been suddenly and violently assailed. The assault on life may arise from internal causes, such as hæmorrhage, complete exhaustion, intense pain, excessive excitement, Asiatic cholera, brain trouble (as in the case of meningitis or cerebral tumour); or it may proceed from external causes, such as strangulation, drowning, poisoning, stroke of lightning, and suffocation from gases (carbonic acid, carbonic oxide, coal gas, sewer gas, charcoal fumes). Even medical men are very slow to pronounce a person dead who has been struck down by the foregoing or similar causes. The ordinary signs of death are not reliable, even the rigor of the muscles is not decisive; indeed, the only scientific test is decomposition. *Quae putredo ordinarie incipit super ventrem in quo apparet macula viridis, et quae habit odorem cadavericum comitantem.*[1]

It must not be forgotten that *consciousness*, no

[1] Antonelli, ii. 609.

less than latent life, may persist longer than people commonly imagine, and may become particularly keen *in articulo mortis*. There are few cases in which it can be positively laid down that a sick person, no matter how inert and insensible he may seem, is utterly unconscious of what is going on around him. Even though the brain has been seriously affected, a small portion, sufficient for psychical action, may remain intact. And in point of fact medical men have often observed that life-long lunatics, children and others, become endowed with rare intelligence for some short time before death.

Two practical conclusions emerge out of these uncertainties—first, that, in doubt, efforts ought to be made to preserve latent life ; and, secondly, that a priest ought not forego his spiritual ministrations till he is sure that life is extinct, more especially as *clear consciousness* may co-exist with all the ordinary symptoms of death.[1] "It is better far," says Dr. Icard, "to treat a dead man as if he were alive, than to treat a live man as if he were dead." No time should be lost in giving the Sacraments. After a few appropriate words spoken gently in the ear of the dying person—*sensus auditus diu persistit in moribundis*[2]—the priest pronounces absolution. Then he administers Extreme Unction in the abbreviated form, passing rapidly from the forehead to the various senses. With these precautions there is the greatest

[1] *Aliquando in extremis momentis anima pollet particulari activitate, etiam in morbis mentis. . . . An haec restitutio conscientiae est consequentia status physiologici vel Dei particularis gratia* ?—Antonelli, ii. 662, 668.

[2] Antonelli, ii. 662.

possible security, for Extreme Unction will certainly blot out all sins that are retracted before death.[1]

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[1] In case of urgency the short form for Extreme Unction is: *Per istam sanctam unctionem indulgeat tibi Dominus quidquid deliquisti. Amen.*—S. Officii, April 26, 1906.

[2] Procure a catalogue of the excellent publications of the English Catholic Truth Society, 69 Southwark-bridge Road, London, S.E.

CHAPTER XV

Frater, qui adjuvatur a fratre,
quasi civitas firma.

IT may be laid down without exaggeration that sodalities constitute one of the most potent means at the disposal of a priest in modern times for preserving and consolidating religion in a parish. They are an antidote—in fact the most effective antidote—to the evils of the age in which we live—*nostri saeculi malis corrigendis aptissimae.*[1] They gratify man's natural tendency to combine with others; they counteract the seductive influence of evil societies; they draw Catholics closely together in the bonds of religion and of good works; they help to establish in a parish, and even beyond its borders, a high standard of conduct, which acts as a stimulus and a protection to all who are timid and cowardly; and finally, and above all, they ensure regularity in the practice of religion, in acts of worship, in the hearing of sermons, and in the frequentation of the Sacraments. What could be more beneficial to poor fickle human nature than to fix, as sodalities do, a definite time, once or oftener every month, for confession and communion, and for other devotional practices as well? No room is allowed for lethargy or procrastination; the appointed day comes round, the good example of others exer-

Confraternities: their utility

[1] Second Council of Baltimore, n. 477.

cises a gentle pressure, each member responds to the call of duty, and so by degrees, by constant perseverance, acquires an ease, a facility, in doing good, which is human nature's greatest encouragement in its daily encounter with sin. Hence St. Alphonsus, summarizing the many good results produced by membership of a sodality, says : " I know from the experience of missions the utility of a confraternity. It is a tower of David ; a thousand bucklers hang upon it, all the armour of valiant men. As a rule a man who does not belong to one commits more sins than twenty men who do."

Confraternities are held in high esteem by the rulers of the Church. Successive Popes have urged again and again their establishment and multiplication ; they have described them as " schools of piety," " retreats of virtue," and " centres of Christian perfection " ; and they have enriched them with countless privileges and indulgences. Bishops, following the lead of the Vicar of Christ, are equally laudatory in their commendations. Individually and collectively, on visitation and in synods, they have often dwelt upon the importance of keeping sodalities alive and active, and of not allowing them, as sometimes happens, to fall into a languid or moribund condition. For instance, the Australian Bishops recommend all pastors to hold confraternities and pious associations in the highest favour—*in summo favore.* And the assembled prelates of the United States, after declaring that truly Catholic societies are one of the chief means by which men are withdrawn from vice and enticed to virtue, direct their clergy to establish them in each

" In summo favore "

parish, to celebrate their feasts with special solemnity, to prepare special instructions for them, and to lose no opportunity of honouring them. *Omnis tandem honoris illis deferendi occasio arripiatur. Iis enim dilatatis bona obvenient plurima.*[1]

Parish priests, too, and those associated with them in the care of souls recognize the value, nay, the necessity, of sodalities ; they agree with St. Francis of Sales that a sodality brings every blessing in its train—" on peut tout y gagner, sans jamais y perdre " ; and if there are any exceptions, any who do not take this view, there is much reason to suspect them of indolence or of a want of pastoral solicitude for their flock. For without a sodality what would be the condition of a parish in modern times ? Would there be any compact section of the people on whom a pastor could reckon in various emergencies, any organized body of Catholic opinion giving a lead to the entire parish, any leaven, as the Scripture says, capable of transforming the whole mass ? Would there be any feasible way of enlisting lay co-operation in a variety of good works, in the relief of the poor, in the decoration of the church, in the teaching of catechism, in the propagation of the faith, etc. ? Finally, would there be any certain means of securing that regularity in approaching the Sacraments which experience proves to be the greatest safeguard of purity, of temperance, and indeed of all the virtues ?

Confraternities (sodalities) are free associations

[1] Second Council of Baltimore, n. 482 ; Third Council of Baltimore, n. 258. See Pastoral Letter also.

of the faithful established and directed by ecclesiastical authority for spiritual purposes. They differ, consequently, both from societies whose aims are merely temporal and from religious societies and unions whose members are held together by no ecclesiastical bond. In other words, no society is a sodality unless it has been canonically erected with a view to some work of piety or of charity. For canonical erection nothing more is needed than the official act, the mere decree in *writing*, either of the Bishop of the place or of the General of certain Religious Orders together with the Bishop's consent.[1] There are, however, several confraternities (such as those of the Scapulars of Mount Carmel, of the Holy Rosary, etc.) which Bishops, in countries not subject to the Propaganda, are forbidden to erect without special authorization, and which, therefore, by ordinary law, are altogether dependent on the heads of some religious body. Bishops when erecting sodalities are not bound to make use of the formulæ prescribed by Clement VIII and Pius IX—*nulla determinata formula praescripta est Episcopis Sodalitates erigentibus* [2]—but it is otherwise with Generals of Orders. Once canonically erected a sodality is capable of sharing in privileges and indulgences.

Canonical erection

The ordinary way to obtain such privileges and indulgences is by affiliation with an arch-confraternity at Rome, in which case both the affiliation and the subsequent announcement of the communicated indulgences must have

Affiliation

[1] Vide Beringer, part ii. sec. iv. [2] Decr. Auth., p. 308.

episcopal sanction.[1] But there are cases in which such affiliation may be dispensed with. The following appear to be some:—(*a*) Bishops in countries subject to the Propaganda have power not only to erect confraternities, but to endow them with all[2] the privileges and indulgences ordinarily obtained by affiliation. (*b*) Generals of Orders, who have received from the Holy See power to erect certain confraternities and to endow them with indulgences, communicate all such to a confraternity by the mere act of erecting it. (*c*) Confraternities of the Blessed Sacrament, by the mere fact of canonical erection, participate in all the favours and indulgences granted (or in the future to be granted) to the arch-confraternity of the same name established at the church of St. Maria Sopra Minerva at Rome. (*d*) All the Confraternities of Christian Doctrine established in a diocese enjoy the indulgences and privileges of the arch-confraternity at Rome, provided one of them has been duly affiliated to the arch-confraternity.

Reception

1. The first essential condition for reception into a sodality is some external act on the part of the Director and of the aspirant to membership. No definite form is, as a rule, necessary. But there is one striking exception, namely, in the case of *Confraternities of the Scapulars*, reception into which is invalid unless the special *prescribed formulæ* are made use of. Where the rules of a confraternity suggest certain rites and

[1] The Bishop should be asked to give his *written* sanction for such affiliation as well as for the *publication* of the communicated indulgences.

[2] There is one exception—only the General of the Dominicans can grant certain privileges of the Holy Rosary.

ceremonies at a reception it is advisable to observe them ; otherwise the common form given in Beringer may be followed.[1] As entrance into a sodality is an act of religion, and as the day of reception is, as a rule, specially indulgenced by the Holy See, the Director generally contrives to make the initiation of new members as devotional and impressive as possible.

2. The names of associates must be inscribed in a register. This is altogether an essential condition, and without its fulfilment the indulgences attached to a confraternity cannot be gained.

3. The Director or his delegate (a priest) should himself inscribe the names, whenever enrolment by either is essential for admission, as appears to be the case in the Confraternity of the Rosary and of some others.[2]

4. Whenever, besides the enrolment of names, there is prescribed or practised a ceremony of reception presided over by the Director or his delegate, the enrolment of names need not be carried out by either, but may be done by anyone—by a secretary, for instance. In other words, a *material* enrolment is sufficient in such circumstances.[3] (Perhaps it should be added that the Decree of Propaganda in the year 1889, allowing registration of members by deputy, applies only to certain definite cases and localities.[4])

5. There are many pious associations, societies, unions, which are not confraternities in the strict sense. Such are the Propagation of the Faith, the Apostolic Union of Priests, the Holy Infancy, the

[1] Vol. ii. p. 111 ; sec. ii. p. 42.
[2] The Arch-Confraternity of N. D. du Salut.
[3] Beringer, vol. ii. iv., sec. 8. [4] June 30.

Living Rosary, the Apostolate of Prayer. The registration of members is not essential in their case. Nevertheless, it is advisable that they should, as far as convenient, observe the rules of strict confraternities, especially as it is sometimes difficult to say definitely that a particular association is not, strictly speaking, a confraternity. The rule that binds confraternities of *never* receiving those who are absent ought generally to be observed by all societies. Occasionally, indeed, an exception might be made in favour of one who wishes to be admitted and who is aware of his enrolment. But the natural desire to obtain an increase of membership should not open the door to applicants who are unlikely to be active and zealous.

A few observations may be added as to the choice and management of confraternities. *Novae societates non instituantur si veteres sufficiant. Si enim facilius aures praebeantur novitati, veteres societates certo periclitabuntur, novarum successus anceps erit.*[1] It is better to infuse new life and spirit into an existing organization, with which the people have grown familiar, than to hazard an unwelcome innovation. Too many changes unsettle the people, and too many sodalities tend to mutual destruction. The character and needs of a parish, as well as the number and the opportunities of the clergy, have to be taken into account in making a selection and in deciding on the frequency of meetings, etc. ; but whatever sodalities

Selection and management of confraternities

[1] Second Council of Baltimore, n. 480. The Holy Name Society has a membership of half a million in the United States.

are chosen, they ought to be thoroughly established and systematically worked, so as to merit the esteem and allegiance of the members.

Apart from a dispensation, there can be only one confraternity of the same name and object in the same place. In other words, if there is a confraternity in any church, a second precisely the same cannot be erected anywhere within a radius of three miles. Several confraternities, however, are exempted from this rule, such as those of the Sacred Heart, of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, of the Most Holy Sacrament,[1] of Christian Doctrine, of the Blessed Virgin, etc. All these may be in each parish.

It is reasonable to assume that, as a rule, a priest will make choice of the religious societies which are most in favour in the diocese and country where his lot is cast. For instance, the Sodality of the Sacred Heart is preferred in many places. It cultivates devotion to the central dogma of Christianity, to the love of God for man ; it gives special prominence to temperance, requiring its members to encourage that virtue both by word and example ; and it does not insist on meetings oftener than once a month, a point of considerable consequence in rural districts. On the other hand, the Confraternity of the Holy Family and others, which have meetings every week, are considered by many more suitable to towns and city parishes, as they withdraw people from many temptations and afford a Director more frequent opportunities of fortifying the faith of the members

[1] *Confraternitas Sanctissimi Sacramenti . . . erigatur in qualibet Ecclesia parochiali.*—S. Cong. Indul., Feb. 7, 1607.

and of interesting them with a series of lectures specially prepared.

Total Abstinence societies

A word of commendation should be added respecting societies of the "Sacred Thirst" and Catholic Unions for the Promotion of Total Abstinence. They are worthy of great praise—*magna laude dignae;* they are inspired by truly Catholic principles; they give a noble example; they have borne much fruit in the past; and they are likely to bear still greater in the future, relying, as they do, for success, more on the efficacy of the Sacraments and of prayer than on unaided human efforts.[1] *Perutile . . . ut in unaquaque paroecia Societas Temperantiae vel Totalis Abstinentiae, tum pro adultis tum pro junioribus erigatur.*[2]

Societies for the young

In some places boys and girls who have made their first Communion are enrolled, the former in the Sodality of St. Aloysius, the latter in the "Children of Mary,"[3] and there can be no doubt but that some such differentiation of sodalities has many advantages. Young people, those passing from the age of puberty into adolescence, have many special perils to encounter. A great change comes over them. New passions begin to ferment in their hearts. A growing sense of independence makes them restless under restraint. They draw off from the artless piety of their childhood. They become reserved and distant with

[1] Third Council of Baltimore, n. 262.

[2] Synod of Maynooth (1900), n. 317.

[3] "There is hardly a town of any importance in the Colonies that has not a branch of that excellent association 'The Children of Mary.'"—Pastoral Letter of Australian Bishops, 1895.

ministers of religion—at least, boys do. They are tempted in many ways. They are accosted on every side by the demon of impurity. If no safe retreat is provided for their virtue, many of them are very likely to be lost. If they are not gathered into sodalities or other Catholic societies they will neglect the channels of grace, they will grow indifferent if not hostile to religion, they will in time uproot and entirely destroy the good seed planted in their souls by parents, priests, and parochial schools. Hence the Third Council of Baltimore[1] orders the clergy to institute *special sodalities* for the young, and to attend to them with more than ordinary care—*omni opera foveantur*.

In addition to the foregoing sodalities there are several others which could be carried on in a parish without costing the clergy much trouble. Such, for example, are the Sodalities of the Living Rosary, of the Scapulars, of the Propagation of the Faith,[2] etc. Once initiated, such sodalities could be successfully worked by zealous heads of guilds, and would require little from the clergy more than an occasional word of encouragement.

Petition to a Bishop

In order to obtain the formal erection of a confraternity, a petition must be sent to the Bishop of one's diocese. Its character will vary somewhat with the powers possessed by the Bishop, but in countries subject to the Propaganda it generally requests his Lordship to grant the following concessions and permissions :—

[1] N. 257.

[2] *Vehementer commendamus societatem Propagationis Fidei.*—Third Council of Baltimore, n. 259.

1. To approve of the erection of the Confraternity of.....in the church of.....
2. To communicate to it all the indulgences and privileges which he possesses by virtue of his ordinary and extraordinary faculties.[1]
3. *To appoint a Director* (for example the rector) of said confraternity, and to give him all necessary faculties for the reception of members, for the communication of special indulgences, and for all other directorial duties.
4. To give the Director power to substitute, when necessary, another priest in his place for the discharge of the aforementioned functions.[2]
5. To approve of the rules and statutes enclosed with the petition ; and
6. To allow contributions to be received in whatever way his Lordship may judge advisable, and to be expended for the benefit of the sodality and on other works of piety and charity.

The statutes usually chosen are those of an archconfraternity, but, though useful, they are not essential. The Bishop can modify them as he pleases. It is advisable to insert in them a clause to the effect that the Director shall have power to delegate another priest in his place for the reception of associates and for the fulfilment of other duties. And if the association is one that does not need a solemn reception—one, moreover, that actively pursues the multiplica-

[1] Decree of Propaganda, June, 1889.

[2] Beringer. "*Ce pouvoir a été donné, une fois pour toutes, aux directeurs des congrégations de la Très-Sainte-Vierge et de la Bonne Morte agrégées aux confréries romaines de même nom.*"

tion of members—then the rules ought contain a clause enabling the Director *to appoint agents* (zealous workers) with power to make enrolments and admissions.

The influence of a religious organization can hardly be described as very active till its members, trampling on human respect, begin to feel and to manifest a legitimate pride in it. This is especially true of associations for youth. If they are well managed, made interesting and attractive, their guilds will be filled with ardent and devoted clients of both sexes. The charms of religion will captivate the young. The beautiful ceremonies of the Church, the repose and charm of the sanctuary, the Christ-like character of the Director, the privileges of sharing in the choir or of presiding over a guild, such things enlist the sympathies of an impressionable age, and prove successful rivals to the music hall, the public-house, and the gambling-room.

Rules of a confraternity

The means employed by a sodality for the sanctification of its members are mainly four—prayer, hearing the Word of God, attendance at meetings, and the frequentation of the Sacraments. These constitute the chief rules of a sodality, the practical means for the attainment of the end it has in view. The last transcends the others in importance; for if people confess their sins regularly in a penitential spirit, and regularly receive the Bread of Life, they are bound to be good Christians; but, no matter how many meetings they attend, no matter how many lectures they hear, they will be little better than highly respectable pharisees, if they neglect the divine channels of grace.

The efficiency of a confraternity will depend in no small measure upon its officers—the secretary, the treasurer, the heads of guilds. They are generally chosen by ballot, for it is the right of a society to elect its own members and officials; but sometimes in practice they are appointed by the Director. As far as possible they should represent different sections of a congregation, and prove themselves worthy of respect by their character and attention to duty. In case a sufficient number of suitable persons cannot be secured in the beginning, it would be advisable to meet the deficiency by enlarging the guilds. In particular, the secretary of a sodality should be fairly educated, and should have both the time and the capacity to keep registration and minute books in good order. The chief officers of a confraternity, with the Director at their head, should meet from time to time, take counsel together, hear a statement of accounts, and inquire about defaulting members. It is most important *to define with precision the duties* of office holders, so as to obviate, as far as possible, the danger of collision and discord. "They should be appointed with due discretion," says Leo XIII, "and each one's charge should be carefully marked out."[1] The members of a sodality council have no power to move and pass resolutions by vote; they are merely a consultative body, appointed to co-operate cordially with the Director, to report to him the condition of the different guilds, to confirm the weaker brethren, and by zeal and courtesy to

Officers of a confraternity

[1] *Rerum Novarum.*

promote the harmonious working of the entire body.

The duties of the Director claim special attention. The success of a sodality largely depends upon his zeal and tact. He is entitled to a certain independence in its internal management as long as he does not interfere with pastoral rights and functions.[1] It is he who receives and registers new associates and explains to them their duties and privileges. It is his business to celebrate the festal days of the sodality with special solemnity, and to lose no opportunity of maintaining its honour and prestige. He presides at the general meetings of the entire body and at the meetings of officials; he receives a report about all the members, warns the negligent, visits the sick, and expels those who are clearly incorrigible. The giving of special instructions is an imperative as well as difficult duty on the part of a Director. He must sacrifice many a spare hour if he wishes to be interesting as well as practical. He must read, and meditate, and pray. He must preach the old truths, but in a new setting. He must dwell again and again upon the commonplace duties of the Christian life, upon the commonplace means of salvation, and upon the inestimable advantages of belonging to a sodality—always, however, with freshness and novelty of treatment. He must ever have in view some *definite spiritual good* of those who hear him, and "the more exact and precise is the subject of which he treats, the more

The duties of a Director

[1] *Sub proprii capellani plenissima directione.*—Third Council of Baltimore, n. 258.

practical and impressive will he be." Hence, though a Director may occasionally give literary and scientific lectures to a sodality in a public hall, though he may deal with liturgical and historical topics from time to time in the pulpit, he must never forget that the end of a sodality—namely, the advancement of the members in piety and charity—can best be secured by frequent and earnest instructions on the fundamental truths and on the divinely-appointed channels of grace.

Confraternity funds

A Director has no power to dispose of the funds of a confraternity. They belong to the confraternity, and they ought to be expended in accordance with its statutes and with the intentions of the donors. The Bishop of the diocese has indeed the right to examine the accounts of a sodality and to specify objects for its superfluous funds; but when granting canonical erection he usually gives a general permission for the disposal of all moneys collected.

Treatment of members

Amongst the various inducements which a Director should make use of to attract recruits, perhaps the tactful and considerate treatment of existing members will be found most effective. The people of a parish soon realize the spirit which actuates and governs a sodality, and need little persuasion to enter into partnership with those who are united, earnest, and progressive. Now, the character of a body, of any association of human beings, will depend to a large extent on its head—on his zeal and prudence. A zealous priest will throw himself heart and soul into the management of a sodality. He will impart

warmth and freshness to his instructions. He will be regular and punctual at general meetings and at meetings of the officers. He will show by his words, his conduct, and his inquiries that the spiritual welfare of each member is the aim that is dearest to his heart. Prudence guides and tempers zeal; and one who is prudent will anticipate difficulties, will make allowance for differences of opinion, will keep on friendly terms with all without distinction of wealth or rank, will be careful not to antagonize unnecessarily any considerable body of opinion, will never allow himself to become dictatorial and overbearing, and will endeavour, as far as possible, to aid and stimulate individual exertion and development. "Praise judiciously bestowed is a good investment. It is sowing a seed that will yield a rich crop."

What an influence a person placed in authority, the head of a firm, of a college, or of a diocese, exercises over his subjects! How a word or a token of appreciation encourages and pricks them forward in their efforts! On the contrary, what a benumbing effect may be produced by the seeming indifference and the coldness of a superior! With what truth has it been remarked by a great author that "la silence est quelquefois la plus grande persecution!" Now, the consideration and sympathy which a priest expects from his Bishop he ought be careful to extend to his own subordinates, to the people of his parish, and to the members of his sodality. He ought make it a point to know and appreciate what his partners and agents are doing, to realize the difficulties they encounter, and, at opportune junctures, to say a word of sincere and tactful approval.

In this way his authority will be discreetly restrained yet exercised, his personal influence will be diffused throughout all the members, and the whole body, growing in proportion to the activity of each individual part, will be built up in a spirit of love.[1]

BOOKS OF REFERENCE:

Les Indulgences. Beringer.
Confraternities. Richards.

[1] Ephes. iv. 16.

CHAPTER XVI

Vae mihi si non evangelizavero.

"PREACH the good news to every creature." That is Christ's command. "And He spoke not to the people except in parables." That is His example. "This man speaketh with authority." That is the lesson of His life. The minister of Christ must instruct in season and out of season. He must often repeat the truths and principles that are never and nowhere sufficiently known. *Nunquam satis dicitur,* says St. Francis of Sales, *quod nunquam satis discitur.* He must unceasingly keep before the consciences of his people the charms of virtue, the lovableness of Jesus, and the magnitude of the eternal truths. Hence, says the Council of Trent, not only on all Sundays and festivals during the year, but also daily, or at least three times a week, throughout Advent and Lent, ought the pastors of the faithful make known the *Sacred Scripture* and *the love of God.* The Irish Bishops, echoing the words of the Tridentine Fathers, command those who have the care of souls to read the Gospel of the day *distinctly* (in Gaelic or in English) at every public Mass, on Sundays and Holydays, and to instruct the people for a short time in the law of God, unless the Bishop arranges otherwise in a particular parish.[1] Four years ago, Pius X,

The duty of preaching

[1] Maynooth Synod (1900), n. 295. "At every Mass at which the faithful assist on Sundays and festivals let the Gospel be read

in his paternal solicitude for the flock of Christ, directed that, besides the Gospel homily, a simple explanation of the *Catechism of the Council of Trent* should be given to the faithful on all days of obligation. This admirable Catechism, a treasury of doctrine, a *liber aureus* according to Pius VI, suitable for all times and places, puts within the reach of a preacher an accurate and connected presentation of all the truths and duties of the Christian life. The *Instructio Pastoralis Eystettensis* [1] strongly recommends such a distribution of sermons and instructions as will ensure that the entire subject-matter of the Catechism may be explained to the people every five years. In this way a continuous and adequate exposition of the faith and discipline of the Church will be provided for the faithful, more especially for the ever-advancing battalions of the young.[2]

"In matters of religion the majority of men in our times must be considered ignorant. . . . There are vast *multitudes* who have so little knowledge of God and of Christian faith that they *live as idolators* in the very midst of the light of Christianity. . . . And, in consequence of this ignorance, they make no crime of exciting hatred against their neighbour, of entering into most unjust contracts, of giving themselves up to dishonest speculations, of appropriating the property of others by enormous usury, of indulging without scruple in evil thoughts, and of perpetrating

What we must preach

distinctly in the vernacular and the law of God expounded for five minutes."—Third Council of Baltimore, n. 716.

[1] N. 687.

[2] See Dr. Hagan's excellent translation of Raineri's *Catechetical Instruction.*

various iniquities."[1] Hence the Creed, the Decalogue, the Precepts of the Church, the Sacraments, the virtues and vices, and the various duties of different states of life, the last things and other eternal truths, should form the *ordinary* subject-matter of preaching.[2] Hence, too, a preacher must convince himself that the clear exposition of Catholic truth is his primary duty. People of the world are too busy or too indifferent to learn even what is elementary. "Vast multitudes live as idolators under the very light of Christianity." They may know the wisdom of Greece, but not the wisdom of the Gospel, the teaching of the schools, but not the teaching of Christ crucified. What they need is not something novel, not something off the beaten track, but rather the old, simple, fundamental truths, set forth with an unwearied freshness and vigour, just as the revolving year ministers her ancient beauties with an attractiveness that never palls on human hearts.

There are some matters of such practical importance that they should be frequently put before the people. They are :—

Recurrent topics

(*a*) The Sacraments, inasmuch as they are necessary means of salvation and copious fountains of grace. "It is," says the Roman Catechism, "by *accurate and frequent* instruction that the faithful will be enabled worthily and with salutary effect to receive these most holy and inestimable institutions."

(*b*) The absolute necessity of baptism and the method of conferring it in a sudden emergency.

[1] Pius X, Encyclical, April 15, 1905.
[2] Leo XIII, Encyclical, July 31, 1894.

Curent sacerdotes ut omnes fideles. . . . privati baptismatis conferendi modum rite calleant. . . . Sedulo etiam explicent gravissimam obligationem . . . illud impertiendi in proximo periculo mortis.[1] "The pastor can never think that he has bestowed sufficient labour and attention on the exposition of this Sacrament."[2]

(*c*) The nature, efficacy and importance of perfect contrition (conversion). "All Christians," says Lehmkuhl, "should be solidly instructed concerning the efficacy of an act of perfect contrition and perfect charity. It is a *matter of incalculable importance* for the time of their own death, and that of others at which they may be present." "Could I," exclaimed the learned Cardinal Franzelin, "preach throughout the whole world, I would speak of nothing more frequently than of perfect contrition."[3]

(*d*) The Sacrament of Penance. "A priest cannot be too assiduous in explaining the Sacrament of Penance to the faithful. In no way can he more effectively attract them to its joyful reception than by the *frequent* exposition of the blessings which it confers. . . . Instruction in general terms will not suffice; he must enter into *details*; he must often and accurately explain the qualities of true contrition, especially its necessity and its efficacy; he must dwell upon the turpitude and the punishments of sin; and he must describe the advantages and the characteristics of a good confession." The foregoing quotation is taken almost verbatim from the Catechism of the Council of Trent. It shows with what

[1] Second Council of Baltimore, n. 228.
[2] *Catechism of Council of Trent;* Baptism.
[3] See *Perfect Contrition,* von Den Driesch.

unwearying assiduity a priest ought explain the different parts of the Sacrament of Penance. Six or seven *well-prepared* instructions are necessary if he wishes to treat the subject fully and accurately; and these instructions should be repeated again and again, in order to eliminate from the minds of the people several misconceptions which render work in the confessional far less profitable than it ought be.

(*e*) The excellence, the necessity, and the nature of prayer. "The absolute necessity of prayer I find taught throughout the Holy Scriptures and in all the writings of the Fathers. On the other hand, I see Christians forgetful of this means of salvation, and, what afflicts me more, I see preachers and confessors neglecting to speak of it to their hearers and penitents. The spiritual books which are put in the hands of the people do not insist on this point. Yet all, whether preachers, confessors, or writers, ought to teach nothing more energetically than the obligation of prayer." [1]

(*f*) The way to receive our daily Bread. "Parish priests, confessors, and preachers are *often* and with great zeal to exhort the faithful to the devout and salutary practice of frequent Communion." [2]

(*g*) The true idea of education. Education is the battle-ground of modern times. Never before has there been so fierce a conflict between the spirit of the world and the Church of God. Never before were such multitudes bent on restricting man's destiny and beatitude to the present life. Never, therefore,

[1] St. Alphonsus, *The Great Means of Prayer.*
[2] Decree of S.C.C., Dec., 1905.

was it more necessary to proclaim the Christian idea of education, to maintain it against all those who deride it as absurd or as pernicious, and to diffuse the conviction that earth is but a stadium where all may win or lose a crown of incorruption.[1]

(*h*) The spiritual and temporal ills that frequently accompany mixed marriages. "Once a year—on the second Sunday after Epiphany as the most appropriate time—let priests read and explain to the faithful, during Mass, the teaching of the Church concerning mixed marriages."[2]

(*i*) The mystic Memorial of Calvary. "It is our most earnest desire that those who have the care of souls should frequently and carefully explain to their flocks the surpassing excellence and inexhaustible riches of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass."[3] "For sermons at High Mass," observes Canon Oakley, "I consider no subjects so appropriate as those which consist in clear explanations and practical enforcement of its didactic portions."

Conferences

The Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, in the Encyclical already quoted,[4] says that conferences to defend religion against the attacks of its enemies are occasionally necessary, but are beyond the capacity of most preachers. They should be conducted with great prudence, only at times and places where good results may be reasonably anticipated, and only by first-class speakers.

[1] Third Council of Baltimore, n. 194.

[2] Sydney Synod (1885), n. 144. The Synod of Maynooth (1900) says:—*Studeat parochus Sacramentum matrimonii . . . saepius populo explicare.*

[3] Second Council of Baltimore, n. 365.

[4] July 31, 1894.

As to the utility and frequency of such conferences, Bishops are the most competent judges. The Second Synod of Baltimore remarks that if the leading objections of non-Catholics are occasionally dealt with, casually as it were, in a kindly, courteous spirit, and without any of the sharpness of controversy, two good results will follow—non-Catholics will be disabused of many erroneous notions, and our own people will be confirmed in their convictions.[1] Very rarely, however, do the enemies of the faith come to listen to its defence, still more rarely are they convinced of their mistakes; therefore, the apologists of the Church must direct their conferences mainly to the faithful, and endeavour to widen their knowledge and to strengthen them against doubts and difficulties. The best way to defend our holy religion is to explain it, to show how consistent are its doctrines, how ennobling its aspirations, how full of beauty its practices. The best way to counteract errors and to allay the spirit of unrest that in those days finds an entry into every parish, is to bear constant testimony to the truth, and to proclaim from every point of vantage the genius of Christianity.[2] Man by nature is inattentive, fickle, and full of prejudices. Sublime truths must be often repeated ere they sink into his mind, just as wool must be often steeped before it takes a dye, or as canvas must be touched ten thousand times before it glows with life. Hence a priest should be ever on the alert to preach the Word of God, ever ready to seize a suitable opportunity, such as the administration of a

[1] Second Council of Baltimore, n. 131.
[2] Chateaubriand, *The Genius of Christianity*.

Sacrament, for a short, informal address to the people.

Two things that bring discredit on the ministry of the Word and on the House of God ought to be carefully guarded against—the habit of talking often and bitingly about money matters, and the *audacia intolerabilis* [1] of marking out, directly or indirectly, any member of a congregation for reprehension. "I can hardly conceive," says Cardinal Gibbons, "a spectacle more cowardly or more contemptible than that of an anointed minister sheltering himself behind the breastworks of the pulpit and pouring forth volleys of offensive language that he would not dare to utter to a gentleman in the street." [2]

"Cupiditas et audacia"

. . . . . .

According to the Council of Trent, a discourse should have two qualities, namely, brevity and simplicity. It should be brief and it should be intelligible—*brevis et facilis*—not tedious and long-drawn out on the one hand, nor too elaborate and ornate on the other, but marked by a noble simplicity, skilfully adjusted to the capacity of one's hearers, and made sharper than a two-edged sword by diligent study and earnest thought.

Brevity and simplicity

[1] Second Council of Baltimore, n. 14.

[2] *The Ambassador of Christ.* The Maynooth Synod (1900) considers a priest ought to be suspended or otherwise punished who inveighs against any individual in church.—See chap. xxviii. 393.

"Oh! who shall believe
But you misuse the reverence of your place,
Employ the countenance and grace of Heaven
In deeds dishonourable?"—Shakespeare.

Quidquid praecipies esto brevis; ut cito dicta
Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles.
Omne supervacuum pleno de pectore manat. [1]

"Without parables Christ did not speak. Priests, therefore, should, by labour and meditation, study simplicity of preaching. It is much easier to find a preacher capable of delivering an eloquent and elaborate discourse than a catechist able to give an instruction entirely worthy of praise. Too often it happens that *ornate sermons*, which win the applause of crowded congregations, serve only to tickle the ears and fail utterly to touch the heart. Simple instructions, on the other hand, are fruitful, just as rain and snow come down from heaven and soak the earth and make it give seed to the sower and bread to the eater." [2]

It is *the desire to be eloquent*, says Cardinal Manning, that causes unreality, vain-glory, and emptiness. It is the craving after what St. Paul calls wisdom of speech that makes void the Cross of Christ.[3] If a priest realizes the great fundamental truths of faith, if he announces what he himself has experienced and looked upon, if he feels himself to be "a messenger of grace to guilty man," if the charity of Christ urgeth him to save souls, he will speak in the simple, forcible, language of earnest men, and he will be sure to communicate to his hearers his own strong conviction in the spiritual things that are only dimly seen. The man "who is not inflamed with fervent love of Christ will assuredly be nothing more than a sounding brass

Earnestness

[1] *De Arte Poetica.* [2] Pius X, Encyclical, April 5, 1905.
[3] 1 Cor. i. 17.

or a tinkling cymbal."[1] The man who has not charity is powerless, *nihil est*, though he should possess the eloquence of the angels. Order in one's discourse, precision of thought, impressive delivery, apt illustrations derived from reading and observation—all these things are excellent and deserve the careful culture of a student, but sincerity and piety are more important—*vita bona optimus syllogismus;* "one word of a holy, earnest man, like the Curé of Ars, is better than a thousand learned arguments," just as a simple air sweetly sung is more pleasing and more effective than complex harmony badly rendered. Hence Cardinal Manning remarks that the words of a priest united with God have a warmth, an energy, and a persuasiveness which no natural gifts can give. Hence on the day of ordination the Church says to the young priests: *Curate ut quibus Evangelium ore annuntiatis vivis operibus exponatis.*

"Doctrines and life, colours and light, in one,
When they combine and mingle, bring
A strong regard and awe; but speech alone
Doth vanish like a flaring thing,
And in the ear not conscience ring."[2]

"Preachers," says Cardinal Newman, "should neglect everything besides devotion to their one object and earnestness in enforcing it, till they in some good measure attain to these requisites. Talent, logic, learning, words, manner, voice, action, all are required for the perfection of a preacher; but, 'one thing is necessary'

Artificial earnestness

[1] Cong. of Bishops and Regulars, Encyclical, July 31, 1894.
[2] Herbert.

—an intense perception and appreciation of the end for which he preaches, and that is, to be the minister of some definite spiritual good to those who hear him. . . . I do not mean that a preacher must aim at earnestness, but that he must aim at his object, which is to do some spiritual good to his hearers, and which will at once make him earnest. . . . No one will become really earnest by *aiming* directly at earnestness; anyone may become earnest, by meditating on the motives, and by drinking at the sources, of earnestness. We may, of course, work ourselves up into a pretence, nay, into a paroxysm, of earnestness; as we may chafe our cold hands till they are warm. But when we cease chafing, we lose the warmth again; on the contrary, let the sun come out and strike us with his beams and we need no *artificial chafing* to be warm. The hot words, then, and energetic gestures of a preacher, taken by themselves, are just as much signs of earnestness as rubbing the hands or flapping the arms together are signs of warmth; though they are natural where earnestness already exists, and pleasing as being its spontaneous concomitants. To sit down to compose for the pulpit, with a resolution to be eloquent, is one impediment to persuasion; but to be determined to be earnest is absolutely fatal to it. He who has before his mental eye the Four Last Things will have the true earnestness. . . . As the case would be with one who has actually seen what he relates, the herald of tidings of the invisible world also will be, from the nature of the case, whether vehement or calm, sad or exulting, always simple, grave, emphatic and peremptory; and all this, not because he has proposed

to himself to be so, but because certain intellectual convictions involve certain external manifestations."[1]

"It is the preacher's duty to aim at imparting to others, not any fortuitous unpremeditated benefit, but *some definite spiritual good*. . . . The more exact and precise is the subject of which he treats, the more impressive and practical will he be. . . . I would go the length of recommending a preacher to place a distinct categorical proposition before him, such as he can write down in a form of words, and to guide and limit his preparation by it, and to aim in all he says to bring it out and nothing else. . . . Nor will a preacher's earnestness show itself in anything more unequivocally than in his rejecting, whatever may be the temptation to admit it, every remark, however original, every period, however eloquent, which does not in some way or other tend to bring out this one distinct proposition which he has chosen. . . . If I have understood the doctrine of St. Charles, St. Francis and other saints aright, definiteness of object is in various ways the one virtue of the preacher; and this means that he should set out with the intention of conveying to others some spiritual benefit; that, with a view to this, and as the only ordinary way to it, he should select some distinct fact or scene, some passage in history, some truth, simple or profound, some doctrine, some principle, or some sentiment, and should study it well and thoroughly and first make it his own, or he should have already dwelt on it and mastered it; and that then he should employ himself, as the one business

Definiteness

[1] *University Preaching.*

of his discourse, to bring home to others and to leave deep within them, what he has, before he began to speak to them, *brought home to himself*."[1]

Inaccuracy

A preacher will be careful to shun doubtful narratives, historical fallacies, exaggerated and unreliable statistics (for instance, such as exalt Catholicity and depress its adversaries), discredited legends, pious fictions, ludicrous incidents, frivolous references and childish anecdotes —all of which, though perhaps acceptable to vulgar minds, bring ridicule and contempt on the Catholic pulpit. "It is unseemly," says St. Augustine, "for Christians—*turpe est et perniciosum*—who pretend to speak according to the Scriptures, to give utterance to absurd views which pagans cannot help laughing at."[2] "As to legends, pious stories, miracles, and holy apparitions," observes Dr. Hedley, "I would always be pleased to see pious credulity rather than indifference on the part of the flock . . . but I should on no account force them on others or think the worse of those who rejected them; and if Protestants inquired, I should try to impress upon them that it was entirely a matter of evidence."[3] And the Second Synod of Baltimore[4] directs a preacher to use the greatest caution — *summa prudentia* — in relating miracles and prodigies.

Vagueness

A priest should strive to avoid abstruse theoretic vagueness, and to make his discourse applicable to the circumstances and needs of the people. At the beginning of his career, when his knowledge is derived chiefly

[1] Cardinal Newman, *University Preaching.*
[2] *De Gen. ad lit.* i. 19. [3] *Lex Levitarum*, p. 149. [4] N. 139.

from books, he is apt, says Cardinal Gibbons, to *talk over the heads of the people*, to attach undue weight to matters of minor moment, and to treat lightly subjects of importance. Hence he should study the country, the diocese, and the times in which he lives, and learn, from his own observation as well as from the experience of elders, the main currents of thought, the dangers, and the tendencies that beset the people. Thus he will come to be in touch with the age in which he lives, and "he will not occupy himself Sunday after Sunday in combating extinct Satans." [1] Nevertheless, he will not pursue novelty for its own sake, nor allow himself to be carried away by "the passion of saying something novel, which is the fruitful mother of many errors." And while he shuns political and public topics that have no spiritual bearing, he will be careful to "*treat plainly of the duties of citizens*, so that all the faithful may understand and feel the necessity, in public as in private life, of conscientiousness, self-restraint, and integrity." [2]

"Ut placeat"

What is the end of a preacher? Is it to please? To gain applause? To obtain promotion? Or is it to give men life—to make them "sorrowful unto penance"? [3] I am of opinion, writes St. Francis of Sales, that a preacher ought not to aim at the gratification of the ear, which is the result of artifice, of worldly elegance, of merely ornamental oratory. He who desires to please his audience says only "pleasant things." The craving

[1] Lilly, *Studies in Religion*.
[2] Encyclical of Leo XIII to American Bishops, January, 1895.
[3] Isaias xxx. 10.

for applause blinds him to the truth. He relies almost exclusively on the persuasive words of human wisdom, he makes little or no account of the Word of God, which ought to be the chief source of sacred eloquence, and he speaks in a style more suited to the platform than to the pulpit, more profane than sacred. . . . Hence there arises amongst the people, and even amongst the clergy, a vitiated taste in respect to the Word of God, which gives scandal to the pious and no profit to the incredulous ; for these latter, although they sometimes come to the church —especially if attracted by such high-sounding words as Progress, Fatherland, Modern Science—and loudly applaud the preacher, go forth from it no better than they entered.[1]

Nevertheless, as Father Potter points out in his admirable treatise, a preacher must study the art of pleasing in its broad sense ; he must embellish his discourses with all the charms of true and solid eloquence ; he must " devote himself without reserve to the art of speaking " ; he must labour assiduously to captivate the attention and enchain the interest of his audience ; and, while avoiding affectations and vanities, inelegance and rusticity, he must strive to acquire a style truly popular, simple yet full of colour, clear yet rich in incident and illustration, serious yet never tedious, a style that presents Christian truth in a garment of native dignity, of sweet and modest majesty.[2]

1. In his life-long preparation for preaching the

[1] Encyclical, July 31, 1894.
[2] See *Pastor and People*, chap. x.

young cleric will find that the Bible is the chief source of sacred eloquence. It is the Word of God, the divine message. It is useful to teach, to reprove, to instruct in justice.[1] It is rich in poetry, in unction, in persuasiveness. "It is living and effectual and more piercing than any two-edged sword." [2] "It gives authority to the sacred orator, imparts to him apostolic liberty of speech, and endows him with nervous and convincing eloquence. Whoever reproduces in his sermons the spirit and force of the Word of God speaks not in word only but in power also, in the Holy Ghost and in much fullness. Those, therefore, act without sense and prudence who rely on the arguments of human learning rather than on such as are divine, and their preaching, though brilliant, must of necessity be cold and languid." [3]

The Bible

2. In his efforts to amplify a discourse and render it attractive and impressive, a preacher will derive no small assistance from the judicious use of examples, incidents, legends of saintly men, comparisons, and various figures of speech. The human mind instinctively loves what is concrete.

Illustrations

"For truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors."[4]

Sacred Scripture abounds with metaphors, similes, parables, personifications, and striking incidents. St. Francis of Sales observes that "*Examples are*

[1] 2 Tim. iii. "A chapter of the New Testament devoutly meditated on was the daily bread St. John Baptist de Rossi broke to his flock."

[2] Heb. iv.

[3] Leo XIII, Encyclical on the Study of Scripture, Nov., 1893.

[4] *In Memoriam.*

very useful and render a sermon interesting; but they should be appropriate, well stated, and well applied. . . . *Similitudes have a wonderful efficacy* to enlighten the intellect and inflame the will. They may be taken from the actions of men . . . from *natural history* . . . from philosophy, and, in a word, from everything. . . . All parts of the world sing the praises of their Maker. . . . As to the lives of the saints, can there be anything so useful, anything so beautiful? There is no more difference between the Gospel and the lives of the saints than between music written and music sung. . . . And what of facts from profane history? They are very good, but they are to be used as we use mushrooms—moderately, and only to awaken an appetite. Of the fables of the poets, let there be nothing or next to nothing. *Their poetry, however, is useful.* The ancients, even the most devout amongst them, have made use of it, down to the time of St. Bernard."

"Scribere quam plurimum"

3. In good time, for example early in the week, mark out clearly and definitely the subject you mean to speak on, avoiding whatever would be beyond the capacity of your audience—*quae non possunt portare.*[1] Recall in your mind such arguments and examples as are likely to bear out what you propose to teach. Read some first-class author or authors, pencil in hand. Distil the materials in the alembic of your own mind; commit the result to writing—*stylus est optimus dicendi magister.*[2] Writing is essential for a young preacher: it saves

[1] John xvi. 12.

[2] *Caput omnium est scribere quam plurimunn.*—Cicero, *de Oratore*, l. i. c. 33.

Bene scribendo fit ut cito.—Quintilian, l. x. 5.

him from "the barrenness, emptiness, and commonness which comes almost wholly from the refusal to write"[1]: it communicates vigour and exactness to all his faculties; it gives him ease and confidence in the use of the pen; it imparts freshness, animation, and energy to the spoken word; it strengthens his memory in mastering a sermon—in a word, it shows the people that he has laboured for their benefit, with the result that their anxiety to listen will be in direct proportion to the care and trouble he has taken in preparing for them.

4. "Some clergymen take much pains to write a discourse for every Sunday in the year, thinking that when they have done this they have fulfilled all that is due from them, and that nothing remains but to repeat the same course of sermons year after year; as if the wants of the faithful never varied, or as if the preacher, after many years spent in the ministry, acquired no additional knowledge and experience, no greater capacity for guiding and instructing, than he possessed in the first days of his priesthood. Now, this is very false, and is not only prejudicial to success in preaching, but is opposed to the first principles of sacred eloquence."[2]

Stereotyped sermons

5. How should a preacher speak? Say a *little* and say it *well* and you have said much. It is form which gives being and life to a thing. Let your delivery be easy, dignified, natural,[3] free from constraint, rusticity, and affectation; vigorous—that is, neither languid

Style of delivery

[1] *Lex Levitarum.* [2] Father Potter, *Pastor and People.*
[3] See McHardy Flint's excellent book, *Natural Elocution.*

nor effeminate; edifying—not seeking to flatter or to gain applause; and somewhat slow and grave, so as to avoid certain showy devices of the mere rhetorician, which attract the attention of an audience but make no impression on the heart.[1]

"Before venturing to appear in public, a preacher should repeat his discourse from time to time, not only to impress it on his memory, but also to regulate the tone of his voice, his gestures, and his whole exterior bearing; and he should do so all the more diligently, if he have not received from nature, or acquired by study and long practice, the faculty of preaching with ease and grace." [2]

6. There is no resource for a young preacher, during his time of probation, but to commit his sermon to memory so perfectly that nothing may be able to discompose him at the moment of delivery. As it embarrasses one who is young and nervous to be imperfectly "possessed" of what he intends to deliver, so it gives him the greatest confidence to be thoroughly master of it. . . . A sermon well committed to memory, although it may be of merely average merit, will appear good; and if it be really good it will appear excellent. It is related of Massillon that being one day asked which of his sermons he considered the best, he answered, "That which I know the best." [3]

Memorizing

7. Join prayer with preaching. *Ut orando pro te et illis quos es allocuturus sis orator antequam dictor.*[4]

[1] St. Francis of Sales, *Letter on Preaching*. See *Instructions on Preaching*, Rev. P. Boyle, C.M.
[2] St. Francis Borgia, *The Method of Preaching*.
[3] Father Potter (almost verbatim), *Sacred Eloquence*, cix.
[4] St. Austin, *De Doctrina Christiana*, l. 4, cxv.

If you trust not in prayer you will trust in yourself, and you will be a failure. Rise from your knees to preach. Let the people see your preparatory prayer; none is more appropriate than the one you repeat every day before the Gospel: "Cleanse my heart and my lips, O mighty God, as you cleansed the lips of Isaias with a burning coal, and so in Thy goodness make me fit to announce Thy holy Gospel."

Prayer before preaching

BOOKS OF REFERENCE:

Catechism of Council of Trent.
Programmes of Sermons. M'Namara.
Sermons. Dr. Moriarty.
The Sincere Christian. Hay.
Sermon Plans. Howe.
The Divine Armoury of the Scriptures. Vaughan.
The Pastor and His People. Potter.
Adjumenta Oratoris Sacri. Schouppe.
Parochial Sermons. Newman.
Select Sermons. Bourdaloue.
Skeleton Sermons. Bagshawe.
Sermons on Various Occasions. Newman.
Sermons. Wiseman.
Sermons. Father O'Farrell.
Sermons for Advent and Lent. Massillon.
Gospel Applied to Our Times. Phelan.
Chaplain's Sermons. Smith.
Five-Minute Sermons. Paulist Fathers.
Our Divine Saviour. Hedley.
Our Christian Inheritance. Hedley.
Sacred Eloquence. Potter.
* *Leading Ideas of the Gospels.*[1] Alexander.

N.B.—The first five books on the list will repay diligent study on the part of a young priest.

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[1] See Canon Keating's work, p. 176.

CHAPTER XVII

Quid nobilius quam animis moderari, quam adoles centulorum fingere mores?

THE aim of catechetical instruction is two-fold—first, to imprint on the imagination, the understanding, and the memory of the children images, principles, and facts concerning virtue and the Kingdom of God; secondly, to watch and regulate youthful appetites and tendencies, to supply them with innocent aims and objects, to encourage what is honourable, to make children recognize and respect the various rights of others, and to develop in them a dislike and even contempt for meanness, cowardice, and selfishness. *Ea instillare fidei ac pietatis rudimenta quae postea aetate adultis firmamento ac robari . . . sint futura.*[1] If this double aim is to be accomplished, the nature of children must be carefully studied, and, long before ordination, ecclesiastical students must be taught how to communicate to the young clear and solid instructions in Catechism and Sacred History.[2]

Two-fold aim of catechist

Children are unreflective, heedless, fond of change and variety, easily discouraged, and quick to realize a teacher's character and ideals. Their notions are few and primitive, their vocabulary limited and

[1] Second Synod of Baltimore, n. 436.
[2] Third Synod of Baltimore, n. 201.

defective. Abstract terms confound them, long sentences weary them, heavy harangues oppress them. A catechist's propositions must be short and lucid, often repeated, and backed up by a regular fusilade of questions.

Interesting instructions

He must realize intelligently the nature of the young, excite their curiosity, tempt them forward to things unknown, get them to correct his own deliberate slips, borrow many illustrations from familiar objects, and, above all, embody his teaching in *scenes, pictures, stories, and hymns,* all of which are the delight of childhood. If, on the contrary, he is dull and monotonous, if he pays little or no attention to the restless minds and bodies of the young, if he keeps them too long at a lesson, if he speaks too much, if he appeals only to their memories, his labours will be uninteresting, profitless, even hurtful. Fleury goes so far as to say that *uninteresting instructions make infidels.*[1] Like our Lord, therefore, a catechist will often point to the golden grain springing up and contending with the tares, to the pearl of great price that lies hidden in a field, to the leaven transforming a great mass of dough, to the birds and the flowers which are fed and clothed by Providence. He will frequently recall such incidents and parables as those of the widow's mite, the proud pharisee, the unmerciful servant, and the returning prodigal. Finally, just as Christ spoke with authority, with the authority of one who had the words of

[1] "If children form a sad and gloomy idea of religion everything is lost."—Fénelon.

eternal life, as He showed love and tender sympathy to all, even folding little children in His divine embrace and blessing them, so in like manner His legate must be earnest, sympathetic, practical, reverent, free from levity in word and manner, not harsh and forbidding, not addicted to favouritism, not prejudiced against the poor, the stupid and the wayward.[1] He must never revile children, and as a rule he must rather threaten than inflict punishment. He must stimulate emulation, and by a skilful use of praise, marks, prizes, and rewards, strive to make religious instructions beautiful and lovable to the young.[2] Instead of proving doctrines by unaided reason or human authority he must always rest them on the teaching of the Church, the pillar and ground of truth, and enforce them by texts and illustrations from Scripture and tradition. Thus they who listen to him will believe, and believing they will hope, and hoping they will love. *Sit itaque amor, sed non emolliens ; sit vigor sed non exasperans ; sit zelus sed non immoderate saeviens.*[3]

Discipline of childish tendencies

But the catechist has something not less important and even more difficult to do than to instil religious principles. It is his duty to exercise the will as well as the intellect, to elicit with children acts of the fundamental virtues, and to enlist their incipient feelings and emotions in the service of Christ. Hence he will often repeat with them short, select prayers

[1] "No good qualities in a pastor can atone for the neglect of the wayward children of his flock."—Cardinal Gibbons, *The Ambassador of Christ.*

[2] Fénelon.

[3] St. Gregory, *Regula Past.*, pars. ii. chap. vi.

which time will make more dear ; he will inspire them with a love for what is beautiful and good ; he will teach them how to practise modesty, how to make casual ejaculations, how to act honestly, frankly, and courteously with their companions ; how to respect the poor, how to conduct themselves at home, how to begin and end each day. He will create and foster devotion to the Mystical Rose ; with the help of the Mass and its mysterious symbolism he will awaken an interest and love for the Eucharist ; with the Stations of the Cross he will keep alive the memory of Calvary ; with the aid of Confession he will, with all his zeal, strive to make the Sacrament of Penance a fountain of peace and strength. "I look upon *Confession*," says Gerson, "when it is all that it ought to be, as the most *direct and effective* means for bringing children to God." But in order that it may bring children to God it must be explained and illustrated by the *priest*. The very acts of the penitent must be gone through in detail ; a possible, even a likely, acknowledgment of sin must be put before the children ; simple acts of sorrow and purposes of amendment must be made for and with them. In this way children learn to do the right thing, they acquire a facility in knowing and acknowledging their faults, and they quickly robe themselves in the interior dispositions of a true penitent.[1]

[1] "What act is equal to that of directing the minds and moulding the dispositions of the young ? It needs more capacity and more care than sculpture or painting."—St. Chrysostom, Hom. 59, in Matt. xviii.

"A good catechetical instruction demands from the most skilful four, five, or six hours of preparation."—Dupanloup, *The Ministry of Catechizing*.

1. "On every Sunday and feast day throughout the year, all who have the care of souls shall, with the text of the Catechism, instruct for the space of an hour the young of both sexes in what everyone must believe and do to be saved."

Frequency of catechetical instructions: Pius X

"In each and every parish *the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine* shall be established."

"In large towns religious classes shall be formed for the instruction of young people, who frequent secular schools, in the truths of faith and in the practices of Christian living."[1]

2. The Council of Trent[2] orders Bishops to make sure that, at least on Sundays and Holydays (those of the first class excepted), the children of each parish are diligently taught the rudiments of faith by those whose duty it is to do so, and whose sense of duty should, in case of necessity, be stimulated by ecclesiastical censure.

Council of Trent

3. It is the wish of the Bishops of Ireland that children (up to their fifteenth year) be taught Catechism in the parochial church for an hour on all Sundays, and that Christian Doctrine be explained to the children in all primary schools at least every month.[3]

4. Throughout Germany priests teach Catechism in the church on Sundays, and in the primary schools twice each week for an hour. The procedure marked out in the *Instructio Pastoralis* of Eystatt may be briefly given:—

In Germany

[1] Pius X, Encyclical, April 5, 1905.
[2] Sess. xxiv, c. 4, 3; x., 3, 1.
[3] Maynooth Synod (1900), nn. 304-306.

"We exhort and direct all pastors and priests having the care of souls, and place it on their consciences, to explain the Diocesan Catechism to the children at least twice a week in each school, and to devote half an hour every Sunday and Holyday, in all their churches, to Catechetical exposition." [1]

5. "We command rectors," such are the words of the American prelates, "to be unremitting in their care of children. Let them or their assistants be present at Catechism classes both on Sundays and during the week; let them visit schools and academies for boys and girls, so that from the lips of Christ's ambassador religious truth may prevail with double sway. . . . Let ecclesiastical students learn the method of imparting to the young clear and solid instructions in Catechism and Sacred History." [2] And, finally, "let children be enticed by little gifts and rewards to come cheerfully to the church for Catechism, and let their parents be induced in every way, by exhortations and even by threats, to send them at the appointed time." [3]

In the States

6. "The priest," says Bishop Moriarty, "who would neglect every other instruction and teach the Catechism to the children of his parish, would have done a great deal. The priest who would discharge every other duty and neglect this would have done nothing. The one will be preparing for his successor a generation of believing Christians, the other a generation of baptized pagans. . . . Brethren, I

[1] N. 699.
[2] Third Council of Baltimore, nn. 201, 217, 218.
[3] Second Council of Baltimore, n. 437.

conjure you in the Name of the living God to teach the Catechism." [1]

BOOKS OF REFERENCE:

Catechist. Howe.
Letters on Christian Doctrine. Zulueta.
Explanation of Catechism. Urban.
Compendium of Catechetical Instruction. Translated by Dr. Hagan.
Sermons for Children's Masses. Sing.
Fundamental Truths. Bodkin.
The Ministry of Catechizing. Dupanloup.
Home Truths for Mary's Children. Madame Cæcilia.
Catechism Explained. Spirago.
Catechisms. Yorke.
Religion. Shields.
Catechism. Bellord.
Sermons for Boys. Lucas.
"Ye are Christ's" (for Boys). Rickaby, S.J.
Catechetical Anecdotes and Illustrations. Spirago.
Girlhood's Handbook of Woman. Eleanor Donnelly.
The Young Man in Catholic Life. Condé B. Pollen.

N.B.—The first three are specially recommended to a young priest.

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[1] Diocesan Synod, 1854.

CHAPTER XVIII

Scholas suas sicut pupillas oculorum suorum diligant sacerdotes.

ONE of the principal duties of a priest, especially in these days, is the Christian education of youth. "The child is father of the man" in soul and body. As from early childhood the limbs may be well or badly developed for their intended purposes, so the internal faculties, before as well as after the dawning of reason, may be exercised along lines of truth and virtue, or softened and debauched by self-indulgence. There are authorities who hold that a child's future may be shaped during its first six years—*educationem ex maxima parte primis sex annis fieri*[1]—that the inner springs of morality may be poisoned from the cradle,[2] or that "the primal sympathy" of the soul with things celestial, its higher instincts, its shadowy glimpses of Heaven, may be cherished and evolved. Therefore, Catholics spare no labours or sacrifices to give a bias to virtue during the plastic years of childhood, and to enlist the buddings of sense and imagination, reason and impulse, under the standard of truth. Recognizing that the best time to mould the will is in early life, they train their little ones to lisp the name of God, to bend their knees in adoration, to practise self-restraint, to be truthful,

Christian education

[1] *Clericus and Lehmkuhl*, vol. i. 789.

[2] Byron complains that he was "untaught in youth his heart to tame."

and to love Jesus. How could they act otherwise? How could they allow their offspring—their joy and their hope—to be caught in the clutches of neo-paganism? Would it not be unnatural, says Pascal, to be watchful, fearful, sensitive about trifles—about the petty interests of childhood—and to be callous and emotionless on the tremendous issues of eternal life? [1]

To educate a child in its early years apart from the influences of religion is, according to the teaching of Leo XIII, to prepare the way for atheism. *Viam atheismi munit, Religionis obsepit.*[2] "Purely secular education gradually tends, from its very nature, to become *ruinous to the faith and morals of the young.*" And there is no better proof of this inevitable tendency than the bitter experience of all times and countries. In the United States alone the number who have fallen away from Catholicity, chiefly on account of purely secular education, is so vast—*numerum tam ingentem esse*—that, as the Synod of Baltimore remarks, Catholics have the same abundant reason for sorrow that their enemies have for joy. No wonder that the Church has always discountenanced mixed or neutral schools. *Semper scholas quas appellant mixtas vel neutras aperte damnavit.*[3]

How reluctant, therefore, ought Catholics be to send their children to mixed or public schools, where the teachers may be alien or antagonistic in faith, where a crowd of pupils may bring with them every day of the week a spirit of religious indifference, if not of anti-Catholic

Purely secular education

[1] *Pensées*, p. 64.
[2] Encyclical to French Bishops, February 8, 1884.
[3] Leo XIII (1884).

prejudice, and where the claims of another life are studiously ignored and even ousted by the greater urgency and importance of the present. Children are impressionable and imitative, and it would be strange, well nigh incredible, if they were not influenced by the anti-Catholic attitude of teachers whom they love and revere. We need not suppose that teachers would consciously pervert any of those committed to their care. But who can expect a vast body of men and women to exercise such strict watchfulness over their words and conduct that, during a long period of years, they will hide from observant pupils their views, their prejudices, their dislikes, on the engrossing topics of religion? Who can expect a non-Catholic professor of history to treat the revolt of Luther or the deeds of the Spanish Inquisition without bias and prepossessions? Will not a teacher of geography discover decay and decrepitude in Catholic countries, and progress and prosperity under the more robust influences of Protestantism? In a word, will not a non-Catholic school infallibly ostracise the Catholic faith, undermine its essential principle of authority, uphold the alien principle of private judgment, deaden the supernatural springs of the soul, and develop a purely human product, with, perhaps, a veneer of sentimentality and a simulacrum of religion?

It may be said that home surroundings and religious instructions on Sunday suffice to counteract the exclusion of God from the primary schools. But we have conclusive testimony to the contrary. The best, nay the only, remedy—*unicum remedium*—we are assured by the Bishops,

priests, and laity of the United States, "*the only remedy for the devastating pestilence of indifferentism and immorality is to be found in schools in which religion and purity go hand in hand with secular science.*"[1] The Catholic homes are few where the theory and practice of Christianity are inculcated—parents are wanting in time, inclination, or capacity. Not even the vigilance of the clergy, nor their zeal in giving occasional catechetical instructions, can countervail the impressive taboo of all religion for five days of each week. And, in any case, it is no easy task to allure children at the end of a week's work from their liberty and their amusements, and to interest them in an austere discipline which has been altogether ignored by the clever and kindly teachers of the public school.

Practical conclusions

1. *The clergy* should present a united front to the world on the question of primary education. They should be harmonious in principle and in action. They should love their schools as their most precious treasure, visit them frequently—each part or section at least once a week—watch over the morals of the children, take care that Catholic books are used, teach Catechism and Sacred History themselves (or at least see that they are rightly taught), and stimulate emulation in all departments by suitable expedients, especially public examinations, once or twice a year.

2. *Students* should learn how to expound Catechism and Sacred History with clearness and solidity, and, when studying pedagogy and pastoral theology,

[1] Third Council of Baltimore, n. 197.

should devote *special attention to the method of teaching children.*

3. *The laity* should be convinced in instructions and in private interviews that they are bound in conscience to encourage and support Catholic schools to the utmost of their ability. They should be made to see by obvious arguments that not merely those who make use of a Catholic school, but the entire parish and the entire commonwealth, derive benefits and blessings from the spiritual and moral atmosphere preserved and diffused by its influence.

4. *Those who possess wealth* and influence among the people should be especially appealed to. But *all the faithful*—parents, heads of households, and young people with means of their own—should be encouraged to make regular contributions, and in every way to augment the efficiency and attractiveness of Catholic schools.[1]

BOOKS OF REFERENCE:

On Education. Dupanloup.
Christian Education. Becker.
Method. Br. Azarias.
School Education. Miss Mason.
Lectures on Teaching. Sir J. Fitch.

[1] For the foregoing see Third Council of Baltimore, nn. 194-199.

CHAPTER XIX

Telum validissimum nefas est in manibus hostium relinquere.

AFTER education, the greatest power for good or evil is the Press. "For the past three centuries it has occupied much of the ground that once belonged exclusively to oral instruction; and with vast multitudes it has become the chief if not *the sole teacher*. Like a never-failing fountain, it sends forth its publications in every possible variety of form, as numerous as the dew drops from the womb of morning."[1] It may not exercise as magical an influence on the human heart as the orator's voice, but it reaches farther. It has not to await an audience, it goes forth and finds one. It circulates from land to land with a velocity that knows no check. It enters every household. It is the cheapest, brightest condiment of every breakfast table. Its form is attractive and manifold —to-day an essay, to-morrow a dialogue, the next day a poem, the next a story or an interview. Its subject-matter is unlimited, ranging from the race-course to the new theology. And its tone is authoritative; for is not the Press the world's autocrat? Schools may teach with dogmatism, Parliament may discuss and decide matters political, Popes may now and again issue infallible utterances, but every day,

The Press: its vast power

[1] Pearson.

in every year, ten thousand editors speak *ex cathedra* to listening millions in every country. "Articles and reviews are projected onwards to the ends of the earth at the rate of hundreds of miles a day. Our seats are strewed, our pavements are powdered, and the very bricks of our city walls preach wisdom."[1] Man's business, his pleasure, his politics, even his religion, lie at the mercy of the Press. The investments he makes, the speculations he ventures on, the theatres he frequents, the books he reads, the votes he casts, the doctrines he holds, the morals he practices—all these are largely determined by the journals to which he is a subscriber. The Press forms public opinion, and public opinion rules the world.

The beneficial influence of the Press is by no means as evident as its potency. There are many thoughtful observers who, while admitting to the full the blessings of free discussion and of a free Press, contemplate with grief and alarm the prodigious evils which are its progeny. What evils? Truth neglected, justice evaded, prejudices fostered, passions stimulated, wars kindled, and religion reviled. Who can deny these things? Who can deny the existence of "yellow" journalism and of leprous prints? Who can deny that there are in every land "white sheets full of creeping things," subsidized by greedy monopolists and by the enemies of truth and public decency? Who can deny that as man is "a frail child of dust as well as an heir of glory," so the Press, his product, is sometimes noble and elevating, sometimes servile and debasing. Would that its

[1] Newman, *University Lectures.*

downward tendency were not so decided; that the art of printing were not so often an instrument of degeneracy, a source of ruin and sorrow; that the Press assumed the responsibilities no less than the functions of the pulpit; that the public were as fearful of a moral plague as they are of a physical one; that parents saved their children from evil publications as they sometimes save them from evil company: in short, that the young were taught to abhor printed filthy matter even more than filthy hands or filthy garments![1]

The duty of Catholics

What part, it may be asked, do Catholics take in making the Press worthy of its noble mission? Do they read and introduce into their families publications that undermine morality and calumniate the Catholic Church? Do they use the Press as an excellent means of making known and defending the truth? Do they support, by subscription and advertisement, at least one truly Catholic paper? In clubs, libraries, and reading-rooms do they secure due prominence for writings that deal fairly with Catholic interests? Do priests bring Catholic papers under the notice and within the reach of their congregations? Do they make the people realize the beneficial effects of good, the ruinous consequences of evil, reading? Do preachers and confessors warn the faithful to shun such novels[2] and ephemeral writings as are likely to defile their imaginations and to dry up their religious sentiments?

[1] *Ephemerides paucissimae omnino quae commendationem mereantur.*—Second Synod of Baltimore, n. 505.

[2] The denunciation of bad books *nominatim* may do more harm than good by stimulating curiosity.

Do pastors establish and encourage libraries in each parish? Do they disseminate Catholic Truth publications in a methodic, business-like way? Do they take an active interest in public libraries and exclude bad books from them? Have they drawn up a catalogue of good books?[1]

It is wrong—*nefas est*—not to make use of the Press for the defence and propagation of the Faith. It is wrong to abandon such a powerful agency—*telum validissimum*—to our enemies. It is discreditable apathy on the part of Catholics not to show as much energy in saving souls as worldly men do in leading them astray. The apostles and evangelists spread the faith more widely by their writings than by their preaching. The Pauline Epistles were the strength and glory of the infant Church. The Patristic writings were the first apologies of Christianity, its bulwark against domestic and external foes. Let modern Catholics, therefore, enter into the spirit of the past. Let them take up "the fearless pen." Let them, clerics and laity alike, cultivate literature—*omni studio excolant litteras, qui dotibus necessariis pollent.*[2] Let them defend the doctrines, the moral practices, the rights of the Church. Let them spare no pains to supply sound and wholesome books in place of those that are injurious. Let them often publish—*frequenter edant*—pamphlets, brochures, short articles—*parva scripta*—which can be disseminated far and wide. Let those who, in books or

[1] The catalogues of St. Anselm's Society in England and of leading Catholic publishers ought be consulted; also the excellent *Book Notes* by the English Catholic Truth Society.—Cf. Synod of Maynooth, n. 508.

[2] Third Synod of Baltimore, tit. vii. c. vi.

papers, defend Catholicity, be honoured, and not, as too often happens, unfairly criticized. Let Catholic printers and publishers be countenanced and supported. And, finally, let all who love the truth remember that it must be championed in the open, amidst the fierce glare of the arena and under the ægis of Public Opinion, the tutelary goddess of the modern world.

What is a truly Catholic paper? *Non omnes quae Catholicum nomen jactant sunt vere Catholicae.*[1]

A good Catholic journal

The mere name does not suffice. There are writers who boast of their Catholicity and yet bring discredit and ridicule on it by their conduct and by their writings—men who scarcely differ from infidels in matters of vital moment, and who endeavour, sometimes openly, sometimes covertly, to undermine ecclesiastical authority. A truly Catholic journal, says the Synod of Baltimore,[2] is one that explains and defends Catholic doctrine, that recounts with truth the fortunes of Catholicity at home and abroad, and that shows becoming deference to the rulers of the Church. It by no means follows, however, that what appears in a Catholic journal emanates from a Bishop or possesses episcopal authority. When a Bishop wishes to speak authoritatively—to communicate any teaching or admonition to his flock—he does so under his own hand or by his own personal act; and if he sometimes gives his approval to a particular paper, his object in doing so is to declare, first, that it publishes nothing against faith

[1] Third Synod of Baltimore, loc. cit.
[2] Ibid., loc. cit.

or morals, and, secondly, that in his opinion it will do good amongst the people. The character of a Catholic paper will depend in a great measure on the conduct of those who have charge of it. They ought to be upright, honourable Christians. They ought publish nothing calculated to violate the laws of justice or charity. Even when refuting calumnies directed against our holy faith they ought vanquish an adversary by strength of argument rather than by virulence of language. They ought display no acerbity in the exposition of truth, no intemperance even in the repudiation of error.

One well-edited Catholic paper for an entire nation like Ireland, or for a large province in such a country as the United States of America, is more effective, more productive of good, than a multitude of feeble diocesan prints. No doubt local papers excite local interest; they are greatly appreciated in rural parishes, and they help to counteract unsavoury Sunday journals. Nevertheless, a national or provincial paper is more desirable. It will concentrate capital, it will attract an efficient staff, it will secure many advertisements, and it will exercise an extensive influence. Such is the opinion of the American Bishops: *Melius et salubrius populo catholico consulendum fore judicamus, si una habeatur ephemeris pro provincia quae commendetur et foveatur et, si necesse fuerit, etiam ope pecuniae ab episcopis sustentetur, sive id fiat in conciliis provincialibus, sive aliter, ut ipsi melius judicaverint.*[1]

It sometimes happens, we are told, that Catholic

[1] Third Synod of Baltimore, n. 227.

journalists rashly criticize ecclesiastical decisions and administration, and hold up clerics and even Bishops to public ridicule and contempt.[1] What discreditable conduct! What disloyalty! What confusion and disorder arise in a community when the very men who should be foremost in courtesy and deference are foremost in discourtesy and disrespect! *Istam reverentiam quam praetermittere licet nemini, maxime in catholicis auctoribus ephemeridum luculentam esse et velut expositam ad exemplium necesse est.*[2]

It is very desirable that there should be in large metropolitan cities a daily paper in which Catholics can trust and on which they can rely for support. Such a paper need not be Catholic in name or profession. But it should see justice done to Catholicity. It should defend the true religion from mendacious attacks; it should exclude from its columns whatever is base or prurient; and at the same time it should take rank beside purely secular journals in influence, in readableness, and in the ability of its staff. Such papers exist in Ireland and in some great Catholic centres on the Continent, but, unfortunately, the daily Press is nearly everywhere else purely secular.

[1] Third Synod of Baltimore, n. 230.
[2] Leo XIII, Litt. *Cognita nobis*, Jan. 25, 1882.

CHAPTER XX

Malis curandis remedium aptissimum et forsitan unicum.

Missions: their value

No matter how active and zealous a priest may be, troubles are likely to crop up from time to time in a parish. They may be a legacy from the past, from the feeble or incompetent administration of predecessors, or they may be the result of the strong propensity of the human heart towards ease and self-indulgence. The great Teacher has Himself warned us that scandals are inevitable, and that the good seed is often likely to meet with adverse circumstances and to yield little or no harvest. Charity may grow cold, schisms and enmities break out, societies become disorganized, false principles gain acceptance, virtue lose its influence, and even the very channels of grace suffer neglect, if not defilement. For such a state of things a mission is the best if not the only remedy. *Malis curandis remedium aptissimum et forsitan unicum.*[1] Like a strong and rushing wind it purifies the atmosphere. It does for the people, practically at least, what annual retreats accomplish for priests and religious communities. It awakens those who are asleep, alarms those who are callous, and makes better those who are good. Hence St. Alphonsus does not hesitate to say that one may reasonably

[1] Benedict XIV, Constitutio *Gravissimum* (Ad Titulum X).

suspect a pastor of *laxity* of morals who altogether neglects missions.[1] It is easy to understand why, as a rule, a mission produces a marvellous reformation, softening the obdurate, stimulating the tepid, and leading forward the good from virtue to virtue. The missionaries, whether regulars or seculars, are, as a rule, men of ardent zeal, who have completely consecrated themselves to the salvation of souls. They come to a parish as strangers, at least in no way entangled by any personal relations with the parishioners; they bring with them the reputation and the halo of their sacred calling; they are received as the "Holy Fathers"; their sermons are simple, forcible, well prepared, and carefully revised; and the subjects they deal with are eternal truths that search the heart and pierce the dullest conscience. Day by day an ever-deepening impression is made upon the parish, a wave of feeling spreads out to the very extremities, a purpose of amendment is generated in all hearts, wounds and enmities are healed, evil communications are broken off, conscience money restored, sodalities invigorated and enlarged, and bad confessions rectified. Indeed, if we are to accept the experience of successful missionaries, the chief fruits of a mission are gathered in the tribunal of Penance, and are, therefore, screened from vulgar and unreflective observation. Hence it has been well remarked that, as Peter when he found his nets beginning to break, on account of the great shoal

[1] *Ille parochus qui missionem non curat suspicionem ingerit suorum morum.*—*Homo Apostolicus*, trac. vii. 31 d.
Quolibet triennio vel saltem quinquennio missio in unaquaque paroecia praedicetur.—Australian Synod (1905), n. 286.

of fish, signalled to his mates, John and James, in another boat to come and help him, so the pastors of the Church, when they desire to push out into deep water, or "when they find themselves unequal to the full discharge of their duties, are wont to invite auxiliaries."[1]

How rendered effective

In order, however, that a mission may produce permanent good, Benedict XIV points out certain precautions. First of all, prayers, *united prayers*, are necessary, seeing that it is God, and not either he who plants or he who waters, who gives the increase. Secondly, only those missionaries are to be selected "who can be relied upon to give *sound instruction* to the people and to convince them of the turpitude of whatever vices are prevalent amongst them." Such preachers will be earnest and solid, *appealing to the intellect* even more than to the emotions; they will not exaggerate the difficulty of salvation or the fewness of the elect; they will portray *the beauty of virtue* no less than the loathsomeness of sin; and, however vigorously they may lay bare the terrors of an evil conscience, they will, like the Scriptures, exalt God's mercy above all His works, and inspire hope and courage in the most despondent heart.

Moreover, combining, as they generally do, extensive experience with the learning of the schools—*doctrinae laude praestantes*[2]—they will act with no ordinary prudence in the pulpit and the confessional. They will prescribe no doubtful duties. They will not allow penitents to worry themselves with useless

[1] Maldonatus: on St. Luke c. v. [2] Benedict XIV, loc. cit.

general confessions. They will bring peace to those who are anxious and reconciliation to those who are burdened. Lastly, they will afford to all a striking example of disinterested devotion to duty, being influenced, as Benedict XIV observes, neither by the cravings of vain glory—*cupiditas gloriae*—nor by the anticipation of temporal gain—*spes emolumenti*. "Hence they shall avoid everything having the remotest resemblance to self-seeking; and before making a collection or allowing the sale of pious objects they shall secure the approval of the Bishop as well as of the rector. . . . They shall not intermeddle in parochial administration, but in the presence of the people they shall praise what deserves praise and remain discreetly silent about what appears blameworthy. Should some matter seem to need reformation they will courteously consult the rector and hear his opinion, always bearing in mind that much consideration is due to his position, and that *intemperate zeal* is apt to diminish, if not to destroy, the blessings of a mission."[1]

The duty of the local clergy

The local clergy can do much to promote the success of a mission. Months, even an entire year, beforehand they can engage the Missionary Fathers, and so afford the superiors of religious communities ample time to organize a suitable staff for the work to be done. By means of frequent announcements, by posting up the order of devotional exercises to be followed during the mission, and by soliciting prayers for its success, they can awaken

[1] Second Council of Baltimore, nn. 475, 476.

amongst the people a certain degree of expectancy and preparedness. If the people are cold and apathetic—heedless of the day of divine visitation—not even the most eloquent preachers can produce any practical results. For just as a conflagration depends on the quantity and quality of the fuel, so does a mission largely depend on the number and enthusiasm of those who attend it. During the actual time of the mission it is in the power of the local clergy to give much encouragement and help. They can put in an appearance at the instructions, take part in the devotional exercises, instruct the young for first communion and converts for reception, persuade outstanders not to neglect the special call of God, consolidate confraternities and pious unions in the parish, frankly afford all their penitents, even children and sick persons, an opportunity of confessing to another,[1] and, lastly, take particular care to reduce money charges to mere necessary expenses. If the local priests generously co-operate in this way with the missionaries, and on the departure of the latter strive to keep alive the new religious spirit that has been evoked, the mission, instead of being an ephemeral commotion, will effect a profound and lasting transformation.[2]

[1] Each year, before the termination of Paschal time, the rector of a Mission should *call in an extern priest* to hear the confessions of the people.—Sydney Synod (1885), n. 186.

[2] Pius VI in *Auctorem Fidei* condemns as rash, pernicious and injurious the Pistoian proposition which describes missions as "*strepitus irregularis*," "*exteriores actus commotionis*," and "*transeuntia fulgura naturalis concussionis.*"

CHAPTER XXI

Alias oves habeo quae non sunt ex hoc ovili.

Our duty to non-Catholics

It may be readily assumed that every sincere Christian is zealous for the spread of the Gospel and desirous to communicate its light and peace to others. Christ sent His followers to announce the good news throughout the world and to bear testimony to the truth, as He did, by their words and their lives. He who is not with Him is against Him; and the individual or congregation that becomes self-centred, that does not earnestly wish "all men to come to the knowledge of the truth," that in no way strives to enlarge God's Kingdom, such an individual or such a community is weak in faith, stagnant in charity, and already in the early stages of decay. It is true that the Church is indefectible, that the terrific forces arrayed against her can never prevail. But the extent of her victory from year to year, the number of those who submit to her, will in the last resort depend upon the militant spirit of all her members, laity and clergy alike, upon their energy in making known the truth, upon their skill in combating error, and upon their zeal in kindling in men's hearts the fire of charity which Christ brought down from Heaven. The practical question, therefore, arises, What is our duty to our separated brethren and non-Christians? How are we to remove their prejudices

and convince them of the truth? Is it by sermons and instructions directed at them? By controversy? By satire? By ridicule? By a self-satisfied superior attitude of aloofness? No, not by these methods, but quietly and wisely, by prayer, by grace, by good example, and by the character of our own lives and the lives of our people. By our fruits shall we be known. What benefits does Catholicity bring to the individual or to society?—that is the test question of outsiders. Are Catholics no better than others—perhaps not even as good?—that is often their greatest difficulty. If, on the contrary, Catholics are good citizens, upright and honourable, if their home-life is pure and peaceful, if they are reverent and rich in faith, then the Church will be respected, hungry and thirsty souls will be satisfied, and the true religion will need none of the "slings and arrows" of theological controversy. The *divine lineaments of Catholicity*, if not lost or obscured in its local presence, *are sufficient to convince any thoughtful enquirer*. "The Church herself," says the Vatican Council ". . . is an enduring motive of credibility, *an irrefragable proof of her own divine mission*, like unto a standard unfurled to the nations, calling on those who have not yet believed, and giving certainty to those who have."[1] Her marvellous unity and symmetry, her undecaying vigour and buoyancy, her broad human sympathies, her manifold methods of satisfying the restless human heart; above all, the peace, the purity, the steadfast virtue of her children —those are the features, the well-marked outlines,

[1] Sess. ii. c. 3.

that proclaim the divinity of our creed and its title to be not merely the truth but also "the way and the life." "If we do our duty," that is, if by our lives, by our sympathy, and by the intelligent exposition of our doctrine we keep alive the Christian ideal of manhood, "truth will make progress among our non-Catholic fellow-citizens, and once made Catholic, they will by their zeal and activity rank amongst the most loyal and most devoted of the children of the Church."[1] "It is not controversy, above all not biting controversy, not even argumentative discussion, that will bring souls to the Church, but rather exposition touched with piety, explanation warmed with devotion; the presentation of faith, not as a system to be accepted, but as the holding lovingly fast to what God has taught."[2] It is not a syllogism that touches and converts men—it is virtue, it is God's grace. Augustine was captivated, not by the reasoning and learning of Ambrose, but by his kindness and courtesy.

"Faith of our Fathers, we will love
Both friend and foe in all our strife;
And preach thee, too, as love knows how,
By kindly words and virtuous life."

Inquirers after truth

There are many, says Cardinal Newman, in a sermon on perseverance, who seem making straight for Catholicity, when suddenly they turn short and miss like a broken bow. But in spite of such disappointments we must do our duty, we must endeavour to dissipate

[1] Archbishop Ireland, *The Church and Modern Society.*
[2] Bishop Hedley, *Lex Levitarum.*

prejudices, we must sympathize with inquirers after truth, and give information to all who seek it. We can do so in various ways—sometimes by an article in a journal, sometimes by books and pamphlets prudently distributed, occasionally by a sermon or a series of sermons, always by our personal help and exposition. It is most important to *realize an inquirer's standpoint,* his prejudices, his special difficulties, to make proper use of what he admits, to recognize unreservedly his good faith and to give full credit to himself and his co-religionists for all the truth they hold and all the good they accomplish. The practical side of the Church, her daily life, should be set forth as well as the theoretic or doctrinal. The main answer to all difficulties and interrogations must be found in the recognition of divine truths, as interpreted and expounded by the supreme authority of the Church—an authority certainly neither less natural nor less efficient in spiritual matters than the authority of the State in civil and temporal concerns. Though it is well to answer questions and elucidate objections,[1] there is no quietus, no balm, for private judgment except humble submission to a divine teacher. "No one should enter the Church without a firm purpose of taking her word in all matters of doctrine and morals, and that on the ground of her coming directly from the God of truth."[2] When the Catholic position has been properly set before an inquirer, it is most advisable not to urge or press for conversion, because, as the proverb goes, "the more

[1] "Be always ready to satisfy everyone that asketh you for a reason of the hope that is in you."—1 Peter iii. 15.

[2] Newman, *Discourses to Mixed Congregations.*

haste the worst speed," but rather to insist upon perfect freedom of choice, to point out the necessity of complete *conviction*, and to recommend and promise prayers—simple, familiar prayers, such as the "Our Father" and "Lead, Kindly Light"—for that divine light and help without which truth and faith are unattainable.

Instruction of a convert

If an inquirer desires to enter the Church a *systematic course of instruction* must be adopted. The will, no less than the intellect, must be formed and furnished. God's grace must permeate both. Should some human or earthly consideration, such as marriage or temporal prospects, suggest and stimulate conversion, it must be altogether eliminated, or at least skilfully subordinated to worthier motives. To instil practical piety, prayerfulness, devotion to the Mass, reverence for the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion, and a humble sense of gratitude, is no less important than to enlighten the intellect. *Time and patience are absolutely necessary.* The Monita of the Propaganda say that the period of instruction should extend *at least to forty days;* and Canon Keating wisely remarks that instruction once a week for ten weeks will ordinarily produce a better convert than the same amount of instruction given in five weeks. A conversion is, as a rule, a gradual process. It is the healing of a wound and requires time. St. Thomas, treating of the protracted catechumenate of early times, reminds us that three reasons, the good of the Church—*ne ecclesia decipiatur*—the good of converts themselves, and respect for the Sacraments, dictate care and caution in the

reception of non-Catholics. If converts sometimes fall back into error, or if, while remaining in the Church, they grow into a "habit of captious criticism which eats into the very vitals of faith,"[1] the main causes are, according to Canon Oakley, himself a saintly and most attractive convert, "*insufficient appreciation of the claims of the Catholic Church and insufficient acquaintance with Catholic doctrine.*"[2] Therefore, instruction should be given *catechetically* to all, and a convert's knowledge, often very elementary indeed, should be drawn out and supplemented no less by questions than by exposition.

Reception of converts

(1) In all those cases in which baptism has not been previously conferred, or has not been conferred with any show of validity, it is repeated unconditionally without any abjuration of heresy or profession of faith. (2) When, however, the previous baptism is judged to have been valid, no repetition is lawful;[3] but the convert is required to make a profession of faith, after which absolution from censures is imparted, at least as an external and precautionary measure. Should a convert greatly desire to have the rites which were omitted in his baptism supplied on the occasion of his reception into the Church, the priest is quite free to gratify his pious wish; but, of course, the duty of confession in such a case reaches back through the entire period of Christian life. (3) Be-

[1] Canon Oakley, *The Priest on the Mission.*

[2] See a course of instructions for those entering the Church, by Dr. Bagshawe.

[3] Hardly ever can a priest be sure of a non-Catholic baptism, except, perhaps, in the case of Ritualists. Each individual case must be examined.

tween the two extremes of valid and invalid baptism there lies the intermediate case of doubtful baptism. In such a case the course to be followed is usually defined and marked out in the Ritual of each country. For instance, in the United States the abjuration of heresy comes first,[1] then conditional baptism, and finally confession together with conditional absolution.[2] But where neither the Ritual nor local law prescribes such an order of procedure, it is allowable, and sometimes expedient, to get confession in the first place as a help and preparation for the worthy reception of baptism, and after conditional baptism[3] to give conditional absolution. The motive of the Holy Office (November, 1875) in authorizing this course is explicitly stated in the words *ad majorem functionis ecclesiasticae facilitatem.* Of course there is no longer any uncertainty about a convert's obligation to confess all his sins, even as far back as his doubtful baptism; for a decision of the Holy See, drawn up in 1869,[4] though not promulgated till thirty years subsequently, has put an end once for all to a question long hotly debated by theologians.

After reception

If converts are not received into the Church with undue haste, if their errors or misconceptions are gradually dissipated by careful and sympathetic instruction, if they are persuaded to frequent the Sacraments with faith and regularity, if they are made to realize the

[1] "In the presence of the Bishop's delegate and some witnesses."—S.C.O., March, 1900. There is a special form of abjuration for the United States. [2] S.C.S. Off., 20th July, 1859.

[3] The short form is allowed in England, Ireland and most Dioceses of the United States.

[4] S.C. de Prop. Fide., 12th July, 1869.

human element as well as the divine, the tares as well as the good grain, the sinners as well as the saints, that are inevitable in Christ's Kingdom, their difficulties and disappointments within the fold will be greatly diminished. But, however complete may have been their catechumenate, they cannot become acclimatized to their new surroundings without time, patience, and friendly help. They resemble people entering a new family or going to a foreign country, and they naturally bring with them the prejudices and prepossessions of a lifetime. They often come, too, with very exalted ideas of the true Church, with an ardent sense of gratitude to God, with a keener appreciation of the faith than some who have inherited it, and with a generous enthusiasm for the spread of the Gospel. Allowance, therefore, should be made for them ; their unselfishness should challenge respect ; their earnest energy stimulate emulation. The special points that often prove a stumbling block to them are *confession, private judgment, minor Catholic devotions,* and, lastly, *the social status of Catholics.* Father Faber, himself a convert, tells us that it is a common fault in converts to overlook the divine character of penance and to go to confession only for the purpose of direction.[1] Again, private judgment is so ingrained in non-Catholics that a spirit of captious criticism may sometimes develop as soon as the first fervour of conversion cools. This critical tendency generally expends itself on certain devotional practices in the Church, and on those personal deficiencies which are inci-

[1] *Spiritual Conferences.*

dental to all human institutions. We must, therefore, remember the motto: *In necessariis unitas, in dubiis libertas, in omnibus caritas.* We must not expect strangers all at once to see eye to eye with the children of the household; we must not force all our devotions on them; we must extend to them the liberty and charity that all are entitled to; and we must hope, with God's grace, to see them become, like thousands of converts in every age and country, the most active and loyal members of the Church and the most striking proof of her attractiveness.

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CHAPTER XXII

Beati mortui qui in domino moriuntur.

Why and how we honour the dead

THE common feelings of our humanity in the presence of the dead—pity, reverence, awe, apprehension—have been purified and ennobled by the Christian religion. They are no longer vague and comfortless. They rest on faith and are buoyed up by the central dogma of the Resurrection. The dead body will come to life again. Nay, it is not dead but sleepeth. It is laid in a narrow "cell," in a place of "rest," "in a hostelry," to await the Angel's trumpet call at the end of time. Then will death be swallowed up in victory. Then will the mortal, corruptible body, the partner of the soul, the temple of God, cleansed by a hundred rites and sacraments, be invested with incorruption and immortality. As the seed that is sown—the grain of wheat that is buried in the ground—first dies and then bursts into life again, so the human body is sown in dishonour, in weakness, in putrescence, but it will rise hereafter beautiful, strong, and imperishable.

With what affectionate reverence the Catholic Church treats the bodies of her departed children may best be understood by examining in detail the directions of the Ritual from the moment of death till the parting *Requiescat*. First of all, the faithful

are warned to continue the prayers for those in agony till death has certainly taken place, and as some time, more or less in accordance with the circumstances of each case, intervenes between apparent and real death, a short interval should be allowed to elapse before beginning the prayers for the departed, and especially before moving or laying out the dead body. *Donec rigor cadavericus appareat . . . cum vita latens plus minus temporis persistat.*[1] As soon as the end is practically certain, the priest, or in his absence some one of those present, should read the touching *Subvenite*:—

"Come all ye Saints of God
And ye angels draw nigh, to receive this soul,
To present it in the sight of God most high.
Go on thy course,
And may thy place to-day be found in peace,
And may thy dwelling be the Holy Mount
Of Sion: in the name of Christ our Lord."[2]

Some time after the conclusion of the foregoing responsory the eyes and mouth of the departed are closed, the body becomingly laid out in a cool, well-ventilated room, the hands joined on the breast, and a cross placed in them. Deceased clerics are dressed in vestments appropriate to their rank in the ministry, and the corpses of the laity are usually robed in a brown or white habit. Candles are lighted beside the corpse, as a symbol of the soul, of the heavenly flame that never dies, and of the light of glory that awaits the body in the future. Martinucci recommends that

[1] Antonelli, *Medicina Pastoralis*, vol. ii. n. 661.
[2] *Dream of Gerontius.*

holy water with an aspersory be left in the room, so that the remains may be occasionally sprinkled, first to keep us in mind of the purifying process which often retards the soul in its passage to God; and, secondly, to secure those favours for which the Church petitions when she blesses holy water. "Wherever this sacred spray is sprinkled, may all uncleanness depart and no breath of defilement linger." It seems to be the wish of the Ritual that continual intercession should be kept up for the departed spirit either in the corpse-house or in the church.[1] *Donec corpus efferatur, qui adsunt sive sacerdotes, sive alii, orabunt pro defuncto.*[2] Hence the Rosary or other prayers should be repeated from time to time, if not in the presence of the dead, as is usual, at least in a neighbouring room, and the priest should exert his influence to prevent anything unseemly or extravagant during the wake and funeral. The excesses that have sometimes disgraced the obsequies of the dead are very different in spirit and character from laudable customs, such as funeral feasts and almsgiving, which were inculcated and practised in former times. "I tell you," says St. Chrysostom, "another way of honouring the dead besides costly grave garments, . . . namely, the vesture of almsgiving, a vesture that will arise with the dead." "Other husbands," says St. Jerome, "scatter over the tombs of their wives violets, lilies, and purple flowers, and solace their hearts' pain by their offices. Our Pammachius waters the holy ashes and venerable bones with the

[1] *Piae societates pro defunctis magno adjumento in his gerendis esse possunt.*—Sydney Synod (1885), n. 223.
[2] *Rituale Romanum.*

balsam of alms." Of the same Pammachius we read elsewhere that he gave a funeral feast on the death of his wife to the poor of Rome in one of its churches. The motive of these early practices was not merely to benefit the living, but especially to help the dead, that, as St. Chrysostom puts it, they might have rest, and might be clothed with an increase of glory. It is the same motive that prompts every thoughtful Christian, in the presence of death, to abstain from all ostentation, and, following the suggestion of St. Jerome, to prefer pious offerings and profitable alms to vain displays and wasteful floral pomp.[1] Pride of life is in strange contrast with gloom and sorrow; flowers, too, are out of harmony with the wish and spirit of the Catholic service. That service is sad and mournful, and from beginning to end keeps before the startled imagination *dies irae, dies illa, dies magna et amara valde,*

> "When from Heaven the Judge descendeth,
> On whose sentence all dependeth!"

Hence, the altars are bare, the church is draped in solemn suits of black, the bells are mournfully tolled, and unceasing intercession ascends from the depths of lowly hearts for the departed. Only in the case of children under the age of seven does the Church put away all the trappings of woe, for their death is always precious, their glory immediate. The bells, if rung at all, pour out a festive peal, one wreath of flowers or of sweet-smelling plants bedecks their

[1] *Hortamur fideles ut gravibus expensis et vanae et inani pompae, occasione funerum, non indulgeant.*—Sydney Synod (1885), n. 224; Sydney Synod (1905), n. 309.

innocence and their virginal integrity, and the psalms and service are of a bright and joyful character.

In Catholic countries the remains are usually brought to the church before interment.[1] Such is the direction of the Ritual. And what can be more appropriate than to restore the Christian pilgrim, the poor man as well as the rich, to the bosom of his mother, the Church, and to send him forth from the very vestibule of Heaven, where he has been often nourished with the two-fold Bread of Life? What more in accord with the venerable practice of antiquity than to offer the Memorial of Christ's Death for the departed spirit?[2] What better calculated to quicken the conscience and the imagination than the solemn liturgy which dramatically sets before us the last great Day of Reckoning—

From the church to the grave

"That day of wrath, that dreadful day,
When Heaven and Earth shall pass away.
What power shall be the sinner's stay?
How shall he meet that dreadful day?

"Oh, on that day, that wrathful day,
When man to judgment wakes from clay,
Be Thou the trembling sinner's stay,
Though Heaven and Earth shall pass away."

[1] What church? As a rule, the parish church; but if the family grave is in another parish, or if the deceased wishes to be buried from another church, then the funeral service takes place from that other church, the pastor of which has the right to officiate and to take the emoluments *quarta parta excepta.*

[2] *Corpus in locum sacrum jamprimum transferatur. . . . Quod antiquissimi est instituti . . . retineatur, ut missa, praesente corpore defuncti, pro eo celebretur.—Rituale Romanum.*

These verses of Sir Walter Scott are an echo of that majestic sequence, that "masterpiece of Sacred Song," which is so well calculated to transfix the soul with awe, to bend it low with deep contrition, and to comfort it with trust in the gentle Jesus. The simple earnestness of faith pervades the entire Requiem service. There is no apotheosis of the departed, no fear of annihilation, but prayers and oblations for mercy. The dead are aided, the living edified. The tapers and incense that honour the former are unto the latter symbols of the light and fragrance of Christ; the petitions that mount to Heaven for those who have gone before are for those who linger behind the noblest exercise of faith, hope, and charity—of faith in life eternal, of hope in God's mercy, and of charity for the prisoners of the King. Is it not, therefore, *the duty of the clergy to explain the Requiem service* from time to time to the people, and to exhort them to alms, Masses, prayers,[1] and other works of mercy for the benefit of the departed? Is it not their duty to carry out with unmistakable reverence the solemn obsequies of the dead? Do not those obsequies demand sympathy and seriousness? Do they not, when performed becomingly and with piety, produce a profound sense of religion, pour a ray of comfort through the clouds of sorrow, strengthen the bonds of Christian fellowship, and enlarge the Communion of the Saints?

The funeral procession to the cemetery from the church or the house of mourning will vary in its

[1] "If you are known to be no money-seeker, make no difficulty about recommending families to have Masses said for their deceased members."—Valuy, *Directorium Sacerdotale.*

character with local customs and with changing circumstances. Sometimes the distance to be travelled is inconsiderable, and then we may behold an exact fulfilment of the Apostolic Canon, which says: "In the going forth of those who have fallen asleep, conduct them with singing of psalms, if they are faithful in the Lord, for precious in His sight is the death of the saints"; and of the early Christian tradition, according to which lights and incense, as well as the chanting of psalms, accompanied the body to the grave.[1] The gladsome *In Paradisium*—"May the Angels conduct thee into Paradise"—is sung, the penitential *Miserere* is recited, the grave blessed, the body incensed and sprinkled with holy water, and—*in actu depositionis*—as the coffin is about to be lowered into the grave, the hope-inspiring words of Christ, when He stood weeping with Martha and Mary near the fœtid corpse of Lazarus, are sung or recited:—

"I am the Resurrection and the Life, whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die."

The various prayers, psalms, and canticles that enter into the obsequies of the dead are either entirely Scriptural or full of Scriptural allusions, and have been handed down from the earliest times by the most ancient sacramentaries. Formerly, when the general public, not to speak of cultured society, were fairly familiar with ecclesiastical Latin, those prayers often produced a salutary effect on those who heard them.

[1] *Quid, itaque, si, dum defuncti familiares lugent, sacerdotes vix aliquem psalmum cantent et de caetero id unum praestent ut nugis, facetiis et risui (quasi de funere illo laetissime essent) scandalosissime indulgeant?*—Berardi, *Casus.*

But nowadays laymen, and sometimes even clerics, never experience the profound emotions which the funeral dirge is calculated to awaken. Laymen, in fact, have been heard to complain that they are more touched by a non-Catholic service, which they can follow, than by their own, which is *unintelligible* to them. Hence in many places a laudable custom has been introduced of adding some prayers or psalms in the vernacular of the country. But there is room for a further advance, and for a greater effort, to unfold to our people the manifold beauties of the Requiem service and to familiarize them with it in the best possible English vesture.[1] Then will it appeal to them, then will it reach their hearts, made receptive by the presence of death and the dread uncertainty of life. Then will those words of Job lay hold of them :—

" Man, born of woman, is of few days and full of woe ; he cometh forth as a flower and is cut down ; fleeth as a shadow and never continues in the same state. In the bitterness of his soul will he speak and say unto his God : ' Condemn me not, O God. Blot out my transgressions. Remember not my sins. Deliver me from eternal death.' "

" I dread my sins, I blush before Thee—
I see the Great Tribunal set !
In fear and terror I behold Thee ;
Forgive when soul and Judge are met."

We have not referred to what is sometimes

[1] See one of the many excellent publications of the Catholic Truth Society of England.

described as the funeral oration. No doubt there are great occasions when such an addition to the obsequies may be appropriate and even deserved. *Morem qui aliquibus in locis viget concionandi tempore exequiarum pium et retinendum censemus.*[1] But ordinarily anything in the nature of a panegyric—anything more than a short, simple discourse—will be out of place. Even a few words at such a time require to be chosen with care and discretion, for it would be easy, by want of sympathy for the living, or by immoderate laudation of the departed, to offend some and to scandalize others. Hence the Council of Baltimore warns preachers on such occasions not to create the delusive hope that all are saved at the last moment, but rather to impress men's minds with the great truths and the words of eternal life. Cardinal Gibbons tells us that "those funeral discourses often make a salutary impression on our separated brethren as well as on the members of our own flock," and that "not a few devoted converts can trace the first dawning of spiritual truth on their hearts to the apposite explanation of the Catholic doctrine of Purgatory." That doctrine, with its corollary of prayer for the departed, commends itself in the hour of affliction "to their yearnings, their sympathies, their reason, and their religious sense."[2]

Funeral discourses

Besides the two subjects thus recommended—the sweet reasonableness of an intermediate state and of prayers for those who linger there—many

[1] Second Synod of Baltimore, n. 143.
[2] *The Ambassador of Christ.*

others are naturally suggested by the following quotations from the Office of the Dead :—

"The hand of the Lord hath touched me."

"As I sin daily and repent not, the fear of death troubleth me."

"The days of man are few, the number of his months is with Thee."

"Thou dost visit him early and dost try him suddenly."

"Man cometh forth like a flower and is destroyed."

"If a man die, shall he live again ?"

"I believe that I shall see the good things of the Lord in the land of the living."

"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord."

The Catholic cemetery

The distinctive title for the Christian burial ground is cemetery. This Greek word, with its natural meaning of a sleeping apartment, was invested by the early Christians, probably at Alexandria, with a novel and striking significance—the resting place of the faithful departed—because, as St. Jerome says, "with them death is not death, but merely a sleep"—a sleep to be followed by a glorious awakening. From the very beginning the Christian communities, abhorring like the Jews all admixture with heathens, managed to have burial places for themselves apart from the Gentile columbaria, where cremated remains were deposited in urns. Those burial places were, after the fourth century, often introduced within the walls of a city, and even within the precincts of a church. But it is clear from various Councils that the Bishops, as a rule, only tolerated,

and often condemned, so unbecoming and so insanitary a departure from ancient usage. Hence the Ritual says: "Let *the ancient custom* of burying the dead in a cemetery be retained where it exists, and be restored where it is possible." As regards the cemetery itself, the Church gives several directions. It should be consecrated or blessed; a cross should stand in the centre; inept epitaphs should be excluded; separate plots should be marked off for unbaptized infants, and for those who are not admitted to ecclesiastical sepulture. If the cemetery is kept becomingly,[1] if it is ornamented with "ancient yews," "rustling poplars," or other suitable trees and shrubs, and brightened with flowers, the faithful will gladly visit it from time to time to pour out prayers for the departed and to meditate on the brevity of human life:—

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth, e'er gave,
Awaits alike the inevitable hour—
The path of glory leads but to the grave."[2]

Refusal of ecclesiastical burial

The Catholic Church has been always solicitous to preserve inviolate the sacred character of the cemetery, and should it ever happen to become the scene of any disgraceful and defiling occurrence, such as wilful murder, it ceases to be regarded or used as holy ground without a fresh religious consecration or dedication. Moreover, ecclesiastical sepulture is a

[1] *Omnia coemeteria magna cura et religiose servari debent.*—Sydney Synod (1885), n. 227.

[2] "Elegy written in a Country Churchyard."

privilege of restricted extension. Those only are entitled to it who die in union and friendship with the Catholic Church; and whenever, as in Montreal about thirty years ago, the rights of the Church are invaded and a burial enforced against her wishes, the polluted space is placed under interdict, shunned by all Catholics, and subsequently purified from defilement. People who criticize such procedure and the Church's antipathy to indiscriminate burial, forget that every community is governed by its own laws and traditions, and that the invariable tradition of Catholicity has been to exclude non-Catholics and unworthy Catholics from the honours of ecclesiastical sepulture—that is, from burial in consecrated ground with religious rites and suffrages. Surely it would be inconsistent for a Christian organization to signalize with honours the memory of an opponent who derided its claims, or of an adherent who abandoned his allegiance. At the same time, the common rules of charity run counter to the dangers of harshness and of scandal in the denial of ecclesiastical burial. Hence such denial is not allowable, especially in these times, when civil funerals and promiscuous burial are on the increase, unless the unworthiness of an individual—his apostasy, suicide, concubinage, encouragement of cremation, or his evil life—has been *certain, public,* and *persisted in to the very end.* Hence, too, it will be rarely advisable for a priest to give a definite refusal without first consulting his Bishop. As is well known, the Church prohibits and detests cremation, not as intrinsically wrong, but because it is opposed to Christian usage and closely associated with atheism.

Consequently, she will neither administer the last Sacraments nor grant Christian burial to those of the faithful who, before dying, have, with *deliberate* disregard of her wishes, ordered their bodies to be incinerated. It may, however, be sometimes advisable for a priest to be present at a funeral in his private capacity, even when ecclesiastical sepulture has been forbidden.

CONCLUSION

In ore duorum vel trium testium
stet omne verbum.

PERHAPS those few lectures could not be more fittingly brought to a conclusion than by combining together the views of Christ and His Apostles, of the Church and her spokesmen, on the ideals and the duties of the priesthood. The quotations I have selected for that purpose are not all given verbatim, but are so arranged as to be at once apposite, and, in sense at least, consecutive.

* * *

Christ speaks to His Apostles

I. I no longer call you servants . . . I call you friends . . . I have chosen you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will be lasting. . . . I am the vine, you the branches; he that abideth in Me and I in him beareth much fruit. If any one abide not in Me, he shall be cast forth as a branch and shall *wither* up and be thrown into the fire. . . . This is My commandment that you love one another as I have loved you. If the world hates you remember that it has first hated Me. If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of it, therefore the world hates you. . . . Beware of false prophets—by their fruits you shall know them. . . . Always do unto others as you would

like them to do unto you. The Kings of the Gentiles lord it over them . . . but *with you it must not be so.* On the contrary, whoever is greatest among you must become like the youngest, and whoever is a ruler must become as a servant. . . . Do not store up treasures for yourselves on earth, where rust and moth consume, but store up treasures for yourselves in Heaven where neither rust nor moth doth consume. For where your treasure is there, too, is your heart. . . . Freely you have received, freely give. . . . Holy Father, I pray for them. I pray not that Thou take them out of the world, but that Thou keep them from evil. Sanctify them in truth, that they may be one as we are one, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.[1]

* * *

The Apostle Paul writes to a young priest

II. Neglect not the grace that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with imposition of the hands of the priesthood. . . . Let no one despise thy youth ; but be thou an *example to the faithful,* in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in chastity. . . . Take heed to thyself and to doctrine—*insta in illis*—for in doing this thou shalt save both thyself and those who hear thee. . . . I desire that intercessions . . . and thanksgivings be made for all men . . . that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in piety and chastity. . . . Preach the word ; be instant, in season, out of season ; reprove, entreat, rebuke in all patience and doctrine. . . . *Be mild towards all men,* patient, apt to

[1] John xv., xvii. ; Mark ix. ; Matthew vi., vii., x., not seriatim.

teach, and *modestly* admonish those who resist the truth. . . . Against a priest receive not an accusation, except under two or three witnesses. . . . Flee from youthful desires, but pursue justice, faith, charity, and peace with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart. Having food and wherewith to be covered, be content, for *cupidity is a root of all evils*. . . . Be vigilant; labour in all things, do the work of an evangelist; fulfil thy ministry; fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life . . . and may the Lord Jesus be with thy spirit.[1]

* * *

III. Dearly beloved children, consider again and again *the burden* you desire to take upon yourselves. Thus far you are free and *at liberty to pass to secular pursuits;* but if you take this order . . . you will be obliged to devote yourselves for life to the service of God, to observe chastity, and to attach yourselves for ever to the ministry of the Church. . . . One who ascends to the lofty rank of the Priesthood should do so with no little *trepidation,* and should be marked out by purity of morals, constancy of virtue and wisdom from on high—*caelestis sapientia, probi mores, et diuturna justitiae observatio.* Therefore, dearest children, who have been chosen to be our anointed helpmates, keep your lives pure and irreproachable, realize fully what you do at the altar, imitate the Victim whom you consecrate, and, while you renew and recall the death of Christ, forget not

The Church addresses her ministers

[1] 1 Tim. ii., iv., v., vi.; 2 Tim. ii., iv.

to kill the vices and concupiscences of your own bodies. Let your teaching be a spiritual remedy for the evils that afflict humanity. Let the *sweet odour of your lives delight the Church of God,* and your words and deeds so edify the Christian household that the Lord may not condemn us for having advanced you to this sublime office, nor you for having received it at our hands.[1]

* * *

St. Chrysostom on the priesthood

IV. What manner of man ought he to be who treats with God on behalf of a whole city—nay, on behalf of the whole world— . . . who enters on a public position where continual cares dull the edge of the mind, where the whole character becomes known, and where the temper is tested? . . . It behoves a priest to be as pure as if he stood in Heaven itself amidst its powers. He should be *purer than the rays of the sun,* so that he may be able to say, "Christ liveth in me." . . . Great prudence, great grace from God, good morals, purity of life, and more than ordinary virtue are required in one who undertakes this office. . . . He should be a man of *wide experience,* no less versed in secular affairs than they who are engaged in them, yet more detached than monks who dwell in the mountains—a man who, while living and associating with the people, can preserve, intact and unsullied, purity, sanctity, patience, and all the other virtues. . . . He must be able to trample on love of popularity. He must bear with contumely, vulgar language, taunts,

[1] *The Pontifical.*

and the complaints of superiors and inferiors. For, if a priest be negligent in the smallest thing, as may easily happen, since he is but a man, a voyager on the rough sea of life, his past good works are powerless to protect him from the tongues of accusers. One small fault casts a shadow on all the rest of his actions, for the world wishes to look upon him, not as a man clothed in the flesh and subject to human infirmity, but as an angel exempt from every weakness. Besides, it is *impossible to hide the faults of priests*—the pinnacle which they occupy makes them conspicuous to all; and even though the things in which they fail be small, these small things seem great to others. Every report, bad and good, is rapidly spread and augmented by the common people—they talk of rumour regardless of truth—yet for these very people, for his entire flock, a priest should have the sentiments of a father for his tenderest children. What virtue, therefore, natural and supernatural, does not he require whose office it is to ornament the bride of Christ—that is, the Church—and to take care that her comeliness is marred by no wrinkle or stain. . . . It behoves him to acquire the talent of preaching, for, if he is deficient in that, the minds of the faithful, I mean the weaker and more curious among them, will be no better than tempest-tossed vessels. Now, it is not nature but education that makes an orator, and, though a man has reached the perfection of eloquence, he will soon lose it unless he cultivates his talent by *constant exercise and labour*. To yield to ease and repose is to destroy one's efficiency, no matter how excellent it may have been. . . . He who sits at the helm while in the

harbour has not yet given solid proof of skill, but if he can manage his ship in the midst of the ocean when the tempest rages, then he deserves to rank as an excellent captain.[1]

* * *

V. A pastor, undertaking, as he does, to purify the hearts of others, and to wash away every blemish, should be chaste in thought and clean of hand. He should be foremost in action —*operatione praecipuus*—lest he refute by his conduct what he preaches by his lips, lest the limpid stream at which he drinks become muddied by his own footsteps. There is no one who does more harm in the Church than he who possesses the rank or the repute of holiness without the reality. *Nemo amplius in Ecclesia nocet quam qui perverse agens nomen vel ordinem sanctitatis habet.*

Gregory the Great describes a good pastor

A pastor should know when to remain silent, so as not to disclose what is secret. And he should have the gift of speech, so that he may be able to announce what should be known, to exhort in sound doctrine, and to convince gainsayers. God Himself rebukes those who fly when the wolf appears, who, like "dumb dogs that are unable to bark," close their mouths in the presence of danger. . . .

A pastor should, in a spirit of humility, be on a level (*socius*) with those who are good, taking precedence of them in nothing, and rejoicing, not that he has a position of authority, but rather that he has an opportunity to confer benefits. For the most part, however, one who rules others is swollen

[1] St. Chrysostom, *On the Priesthood* (Fr. Boyle's Translation), passim.

with conceit. He sees all things at his service, all his orders instantly carried out, all his subjects ready to applaud, even though he does ill, and none disposed to contradict. Deluded by these things, he grows overweening in his own conceit, the deference by which he is surrounded blinds him to the truth, he forgets himself, lives on the breath of others, and comes to regard himself as what people say he is, rather than as what he ought know himself to be. . . .

A pastor must not grow remiss in the care of his own soul. He must not become engrossed in secular business. For if the head is feeble vigorous limbs avail not ; and in vain does an army pursue the enemy if its leader has lost the way. Nevertheless, secular business must be undertaken sometimes, not for its own sake or with avidity, but out of consideration for others. Those who censure the deeds of delinquents, but pay no heed to their temporal necessities, will never acquire much influence. Truth appeals not to a poor man if mercy—*manus misericordiae*—does not relieve his wants. . . .

A pastor should not strive anxiously to please men—let him rather direct all his energies to those things which ought to please. A desire to please may easily degenerate into *cowardice* and complaisancy, for a man may be so anxious not to dull the edge of his popularity that he will not correct his subjects, even when they go astray. The love of the people, therefore, must be sought not for its own sake, not for the pastor's sake, but as a means, as a silken cord, by which their hearts may be drawn to the love of their Maker. . . .

All will go well with a pastor—*omne hoc rite a*

rectore agitur—if he meditates daily and earnestly on the instructions of Holy Writ and can say with David : *Quomodo dilexi legem tuam, Domine, tota die meditatio mea est*—" How tenderly, O Lord, have I loved Thy law ; it is my meditation all the day." [1]

* * *

VI. A priest must be a man of God at his ordination, or else he is not prepared for his ministry. He must have become *a serious, solid, determined servant of God,* with his whole heart given to God, and an explicit dedication of himself to his Heavenly Father. He may not have thereby acquired the habits of all the specific virtues. His tongue will still be unruly, his temper will often break from his control, his sensuality will lead him into sin, and his obedience will be imperfect. But he ought to have, and must have, the great predominating and directing virtue of all —the firm consecration of the heart and will to God. With this he will never drift far in the direction of sin. With this he will constantly recall himself to the duty of disciplining his character by grace. But without this he will find himself at the outset of his ministry like a man adrift in a boat without oar or rudder. . . .

A modern episcopal admonition

Hence, if a youth is indifferent towards the priestly state, or thinks lightly of its excellence, if he experiences a certain disinclination or dislike, or perhaps disquiet and aversion, for celibacy, prayer, the divine offices, a life of recollection, theological study, or the duty of the care of souls ; if he is fond

[1] *Regula Pastoralis,* pars i. and ii., passim.

of secular occupation, is inclined to the pleasures of the world, and feels more satisfaction in serving the world than God, such a one carries not the marks of a divine vocation, and his entering the service of God can only be from some unworthy motive, such as *convenience*, ambition, or the love of money.

On the other hand, one who holds in high esteem the state and duties of the priest, who feels himself drawn to them, who experiences pleasure and satisfaction in the service of God, in a life of chastity, in prayer, in retirement, and in sacred studies, and who is determined to seek in the pastoral office the honour of God alone and the salvation of his own soul and the souls of others—in him it is impossible to mistake the call of God. And the purer the intention, and the more firm the resolution to do and to suffer all for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, the more certain is the vocation, and the more joyful and blessed will be the co-operation therewith. And if we desire to have a proof of the genuineness of anyone's inclinations towards the Priesthood, and of the purity of his intention, there is none better than *the earnest endeavour to cultivate the talents and powers given by God*, and to dispose and prepare oneself more and more for the due fulfilment of the Pastoral office.[1]

[1] Bishop Hedley, *Lex Levitarum*.

APPENDIX

Priesthood of a half-trained Youth Page 1

" What, then, must be the danger of the priesthood to the shallow and half-trained youth who has never looked seriously into the failings and weakness of his own heart ? There is, perhaps, little fault to find with him during the years of his studies. He obeys, he works fairly well, he is not outwardly greedy or selfish ; he keeps his place in the ranks, in the routine, neither very conspicuous for zeal nor very notable for remissness. All this is perfectly compatible with very feeble virtue. His life does not *call* upon his virtue. His character and nature are such that he prefers to march along in the routine rather than to risk discomfort by making any fight for his own convenience.

" His position, in a seminary, is, perhaps, an easier one than he would have had in the world. To put off the ' ignominy of the secular habit ' has to him been not a sacrifice but a relief. He has not felt as yet any keen trouble, or had to face any heavy cross. Whilst he obeys, therefore, it is rather through easiness of temper than on any supernatural principle ; whilst he works, it is because it would never do to imperil his ordination by failing in his studies ; whilst he leads a regular life, it is rather out of custom than holy mortification ; and whilst he lives at peace with his companions, it is rather because it is troublesome and stupid to quarrel than because he loves the souls for which Christ died.

" When a youth like this is ordained—and he cannot be refused ordination—the trouble begins. He was all right in the harbour—behind the breakwater. But the waves of the great world, and even those disturbances that find their way into a little congregation a small cure of souls,

will try him and search him. First comes the tendency to take things easy now that he is more or less his own master. He has never really learned and studied self-denial, which is at the root of the Christian life, and therefore he is at once drawn to a score of different kinds of self-indulgence—to shortening his prayer, to irregularity in hours, to reading novels and newspapers, and to *the study of his comfort*, in eating, sleeping, etc. He has never really got down to what true humility is ; and therefore success elates him, the miserable flattery of the ignorant pleases him, a rebuke or even a piece of advice hurts him, and any little *failure makes him wretched.* He has practised, let us hope, the holy virtue of purity ; but he has never penetrated what is meant by worldliness ; he has never understood that free and unrestrained intercourse with men and women, and the finding one's pleasure in worldly amusements and worldly ways are as dangerous to purity of heart as the malaria of an African coast is to the body, and therefore he soon *begins to grow worldly, in manners, in words, in dress, in occupation ;* he finds society pleasant—and it need not be the highest or the most refined society either ; he loses his time in *unpriestly recreation ;* he forms friendships ; he yields to the pleasure that he finds in the company of women ; perhaps he burns his fingers, is laughed at, and learns a lesson ; perhaps things go further, and the poor, weak, and foolish young man causes a scandal, or becomes an apostate."—HEDLEY, *Lex Levitarum.*

Missionary's Oath Page 4

"I.....son of.....
of the Diocese.....promise and swear that, when promoted to Holy Orders, I will not, without special permission from the Apostolic See or the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda, enter any Religious Order, Society, or Congregation, or make any profession in any of them.

"I likewise vow and swear that in this Diocese (or Vica-

riate) I will *ever labour* in the divine ministry *for the salvation of souls* under the complete guidance and government of the Right Rev. Ordinary for the time being, and that I will do so, even though, with the permission of the Apostolic See, I should make my profession in a Religious Order, Society, or Congregation. I likewise profess and swear that I understand the aforesaid oath and its binding force, and that I will be faithful to it. So help me God and these holy Gospels."

The foregoing oath is taken by all who are ordained on the missionary title, that is, for the service of the apostolic missions. According to the instruction of the Propaganda it is to be administered " only to those who, by their disposition and docility, their uprightness, purity of intention, and ability, their proficiency in sacred studies, and their contempt for the things of the world, *give promise of becoming earnest ministers of the Gospel.* Superiors are strictly bound to carry out this Instruction." Those who take the missionary oath can gain a Plenary Indulgence (applicable to the Souls in Purgatory) on the first day on which they take it, and on every subsequent anniversary day if they renew it.

De Castitate Servanda Page 8

" Salvator noster a vitio castitati opposito ita abhorruit ut, quamvis atrocissima crimina falso sibi imputari permiserit, nusquam tamen impudicitiae, ne dicam accusatione, sed ne quidem suspicione ulla a suis etiam infensissimis hostibus notatum fuisse legamus. . . . Quapropter quilibet sacerdos, in castitate tum corporis tum animi integre servanda, omnem curam, diligentiam, et praecautionem, quantum in se est, adhibere debet. Praeterea, totis viribus debet impedire ne ullus hominum de illo vel levissimam suspicionem vitii contrarii possit concipere : haec enim sola suspicio, etiamsi omnino injusta, plus obesset suo ministerio quam alia crimina falso illi imputata."—S. VINCENTIUS DE PAULO.

Praecipua media quibus sacerdos potest servare castitatem :—

1. "Saepe saepius mente et cogitatione recolere venerandum illud Sacrificium quod quotidie offert." "Nisi tenero simul et devoto affectu Christum amet, mox creaturis adhaerebit."

2. "Timide de se suaque virtute sentire, Deoque unice confidere qui sacerdoti superbo resistit."

3. *Digne attente et devote* recitare divinum officium, "quod sacerdoti injunctum est tanquam medium efficacissimum custodiendae castitatis."

4. Tenerrimam devotionem indesinenter fovere erga Beatam Virginem, cujus potenti auxilio pudicitia facilius custodiri potest.

5. Recordari Passionis Christi; nullum enim tam potens est medicamentum contra ardorem libidinis sicut mors Redemptoris nostri.

6. Sedulo vitare occasiones periculosas peccandi, quales sunt lectiones, spectacula, amicitiae, et oblectamenta, quae ad libidinem excitare, possunt.

7. Custodire sensus internos et externos, *oculos* presertim et *phantasiam*. "Nil agere, nil loqui, nil vultu aut gestu exprimere, quod honestati, modestiae, pudori, minus consentaneum esse quis suspicari possit."

8. Corpus castigare assiduo labore; "qui sequitur otium stultissimus est"; "multam enim malitiam docuit otiositas."

9. "Obstare principiis; neque enim ex improviso ac repente, sed paulatim, istud vitium incontinentiae animos occupat atque inficit, crescitque in dies, donec progressu temporis totam, ut ait Chrysologus, sacerdotalis spiritus sanctitatem extinguat."

10. Virtutem obedientiae diligenter custodire. "Qui non sponte se subdit superiori signum est quod caro sua necdum perfecte sibi subdit." Tu Deo, tibi caro. Tu majori, minor tibi.

(Compare Second Synod of Baltimore, nn. 161-166, and Tanquerey, vol. iii. n. 1066.)

Turba Ephemeridum Page 12

Heu! saepius accidit nostra aetate ut homines e clero tenebris dubitationis sensim offundantur et saeculi obliqua sectentur, eo presertim quod piis divinisque libris alios omne genus atque ephemeridum turbam praeoptent, ea quidem scatentia errore blando ac lue.—PIUS X, *Exhortatio ad Clerum Catholicum.*

Recessus Menstruus Page 14

Nec minus proficiet animis si recessus ad paucas horas menstruus, vel privatim vel communiter, habeatur; quem morem libentes videmus pluribus jam locis inductum, ipsis Episcopis faventibus atque interdum praesidentibus coetui.—PIUS X, ibid.

Study Page 19

Conferences, says the Second Synod of Baltimore, n. 68—*collationes de rebus theologicis*—prevent intellectual stagnation, promote sound and uniform methods of direction, and safeguard the principles of sacred science. The Synod of Maynooth (1900), vii. 9, recommends the discussion of modern errors and the adoption of a book dealing with them.

* * *

"In order that young priests may not neglect the sacred sciences, they are to be examined, once a year for five years after their ordination, in Scripture, Theology, Canon Law, Ecclesiastical History, and Liturgy. Those who fail to satisfy the examiners, or who for any reason escape the examinations, are to present themselves subsequently as many times as they fail or absent themselves. A record of the examinations is to be carefully preserved in the Episcopal Archives, in order that ecclesiastical superiors may, when making appointments, be better able to judge of the character and learning of priests."—Third Council of Baltimore, nn. 186, 187, 188.

The Synod of Maynooth (1900), nn. 201, 202, speaks in similar terms.

* * *

A concursus or examination by Diocesan Examiners is the canonical preliminary to the appointment of an irremovable rector. The examination is both written and oral, and deals with all the subjects with which a pastor should be acquainted, viz., Sacred Scripture, Ecclesiastical History, Dogmatic and Moral Theology, Canon Law and Liturgy. Each candidate is required to exhibit in writing a specimen of his capacity as a preacher and as a catechetical instructor. The Synod of Baltimore (following in the footsteps of Benedict XIV's constitution *Cum illud*) directs the examiners to consider :—

(*a*) The value and weight of the opinions of each Candidate, the choice of his language, the clearness and precision of the written sermon ;

(*b*) The capacity of each Candidate as a Catechist, his ability to break the Bread of Life for little ones, and to give the milk of heavenly doctrine to all who need it ;

(*c*) The past records of a Candidate, the integrity of his life, his prudence, his skill in administering temporal affairs, and his services to the Church.

The Study of Newman Page 21

" I would advise you to make a special study of Cardinal Newman's works. . . . Every page does good, and I am sure will do you good. . . . To choose the works of one genius, one of those few giants of the intellectual and spiritual world, and to stick to him—instead of wandering about, reading a bit here and there—is true wisdom. Newman comes in a line with St. Paul, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas Aquinas. He was a man of *stupendous intellectual power and at the same time a most saintly man, entirely devoted to God.* He is so clear that it would be difficult to misunderstand him. He and St. Thomas excel in the gift

of clarity. . . . Now, Almighty God having raised up a man of this order, it does seem a pity that educated Catholics do not read him more. To go to other writers instead, and especially to those who are likely to lessen the life-giving light of Faith, seems idiotic. It is surely more unreasonable to read what might injure Faith than to eat unwholesome food that would injure your health. As much more unreasonable as the soul is superior to the body."—FATHER B. WILBERFORCE, O.P., *Letters.*

The Reading of Novels Page 21

"Assuredly black night will quickly cover the vast bulk of modern fiction. . . . Beside the great creations of the world it is flat and poor . . . yet he would be a bold man who should say that *Pickwick* and *Vanity Fair*, the *Last Days of Pompeii* and *Jane Eyre*, the *Last Chronicle of Barset* and *Silas Marner*, will never take rank in the roll which opens with . . . the *Vicar*, and *Tristram Shandy*."

"In brilliancy of conception, in wealth of character, in dramatic art, in glow and harmony of colour, Scott put forth (in his romances) all the powers of a master poet. He is a *perfect library* in himself. . . . He has done in his romances for the various phases of modern history what Shakespeare has done for the manifold types of human character. . . . And this glorious, and most human, and most historical of writers, . . . this manliest and truest and widest of romancers, is neglected for some hothouse hybrid, or some of the raw stuff which dribbles incessantly into circulating libraries."

"To know *Don Quixote*, to follow out the whole mystery of its double world, is to know the very tragi-comedy of human life, the contrast of the ideal with the real, of chivalry with good sense, of heroic failure with vulgar utility, of the past with the present, of the impossible sublime with the possible commonplace."—FREDERIC HARRISON, *The Choice of Books.*

The Reading of the Bible Page 31

There is a danger in suggesting a large array of books under this heading. For various reasons most priests cannot enter upon a critical study of the Scriptures, especially along the lines of modern research. What they need is rather a loving familiarity with all parts of the sacred text, and they cannot acquire this if instead of reading and re-reading each book of the Bible as a distinct and complete message in itself, they allow their attention to be continually distracted by elaborate commentaries, like schoolboys preparing for an examination who are more pre-occupied with notes than with the text. Nowhere is it more important to be consecutive in one's reading than in the evangelical accounts of our Saviour. Much of the charm of the inspired narrative is lost by continually turning aside from it. Coleridge's *Life of our Lord* (not to mention other works on Sacred Scripture by the same author) is an excellent commentary. So, too, is such a *Life of Christ* as Fouard's. *La clef de l'Evangile*, by the Abbé Lesêtre, is brief but very helpful. Canon Ryan's work on the Gospels of the Sundays of the year is by far the best work of its kind. Knecht's short commentary on select portions of the Biblical narrative will be found very serviceable by a priest preparing a lecture on Bible History or a catechetical instruction. All Fouard's works on the early Church, on SS. Peter, Paul, and John, combine the Acts and Epistles of the Apostles in enlarged and interesting narratives. The list of books at the end of the Appendix mentions several works which deal with the history, customs, and country of the Hebrews; amongst them Sir A. Geikie's *Book and the Bible* holds a leading place.

Readings on Art Page 35

Reinach's *Apollo* is an admirable survey of the history of Art. *Modern Painters*, by Ruskin, ranks as a *chef-d'œuvre*. Müther's *History of Modern Painting* (4 vols.)

is exceedingly interesting, also his *History of Painting*; but both display a strong prejudice against Catholicity. *How to Look at a Picture*, and *Painting Popularly Explained*, are suggestive. All Ruskin's writings may be recommended. The best way to awaken one's interest in Art is to read good lives of some of the great artists. A selection from Vasari's *Lives* (Temple Classics) will be found very readable. Ferguson's *History of Modern Architecture* is a standard work. Roger Smith treats of *Architecture, Classical and Early English.* A few others may be added: *Sacred and Legendary Art*, Mrs. Jameson; *Lectures on Art*, Sir J. Reynolds; *Italian Painters*, and other handbooks, Kugler, *The Painters of Florence*, Cartwright; *Christian Art*, Lord Lindsay; *Some Lectures*, see Wiseman's works.

Clerical Union Page 38

Berardi says that divisions amongst the clergy arise (1) from the *passions*, especially pride; (2) from *false principles*, such as those of continental liberalism; (3) from a spirit of intolerance; (4) from disrespect towards authority; and lastly, from a kind of *fanaticism*, even in good principles, when, for instance, one section of the clergy is so anxious for the perfection of other sections as to *plague* them. The *safeguards* of clerical unity are, he says, first to get the clergy to refrain from the reading of evil prints, and secondly to make charity the direct end of the spiritual exercises.—*Casus Conscientiae.*

* * *

"To scorn and despise a fellow-clergyman because he happens to be of a different nationality from ourselves is as *senseless* as it is *criminal*. . . . A provincial or sectional spirit would exhibit base ingratitude on the part of a native clergy. . . . As to priests of foreign birth, it is their bounden duty to put away a clannish disposition and to identify themselves with the country of their adoption."—GIBBONS, *The Ambassador of Christ.*

Adstrictior Conjunctio Sacerdotum Page 47

Aliud praeterea cordi est commendare: adstrictiorem quamdam sacerdotum, ut fratres addecet, inter se conjunctionem, quam episcopalis auctoritas firmet ac moderetur. Id sane commendabile quod in societatem coalescant ad mutuam opem in adversis parandam, ad nominis et munerum integritatem contra hostiles astus tuendam, ad alias istiusmodi causas. At pluris profecto interest consociationem eos inire ad facultatem doctrinae sacrae excolendam, in primisque ad sanctum vocationis propositum impensiore cura retinendum, ad animarum provehendas rationes, consiliis viri busque collatis.—PIUS X, *Ad Clerum Catholicum.*

Conversation Page 84

"The first ingredient of good talk is truth, the second good sense, the third good humour, and the fourth wit, and the first three at any rate are in the power of anyone."—LORD AVEBURY.

* * *

"A man who lays himself out to amuse is never a safe man to have for a friend or even an acquaintance. He is not a man whom anyone really loves or respects. He is never innocent. He is for ever jostling charity by the pungency of his criticisms and wounding justice by the revelation of secrets."—FABER, *Conferences.*

Almsgiving Page 93

"The company of charity," says St. Vincent de Paul, the universal Patron of Charity, ". . . shall enable those who can work to gain a livelihood and supply those who cannot with the means of subsistence, thus fulfilling the command given us by God in the fifteenth chapter of Deuteronomy, that *we should act in such a manner that there may be no poor begging among us.*"

* * *

"It is clear that if liberality is not to degenerate into

useless prodigality it must be practised with some kind of measure. Strong men who have no reason for leading vagabond lives may often be seen coming to ask for the whole treasure of the poor, and if you give them a little they ask for more. If you believe them too readily, they will soon consume all you have to give in alms. Measure, therefore, your gifts in such manner that men like these may not be sent away altogether empty-handed."—ST. AMBROSE, *His Life.*

Home and Health Pages 98-102

In novis sacerdotum domibus aedificandis semper exstruatur oratorium . . . In habitationibus sacerdotum sine oratorio exstructis . . . secernatur oratorio locus aliquis decens et congruus. SS. Sacramentum quando in domo sacerdotali asservatur, sit tabernaculo inclusum, et lampas coram ipso semper colluceat.—Maynooth Synod (1900), xv. n. 77.

* * *

Neque mulieres, licet propinqua cognatione conjunctas, in eadem secum domo commorari sinant.—Sydney Synod (1905), n. 222.

* * *

" C'est dans les premiers jours où la domestique entre à votre service qu'il faut lui tracer avec netteté et fermeté la conduite que vous entendez qu'elle suive."—REAUME, *Le Guide du jeune Prêtre.*

" Gossiping with servants and noticing them more than is needful may easily lead to comment, and indicates ignorance of human nature and of matters of social detail."—CARDINAL VAUGHAN, *The Young Priest.*

* * *

The confidence of parishioners will be shaken if they think that servants have direct or indirect influence in the management of parochial affairs.

* * *

To prevent the mistakes that arise from mere verbal

messages, a priest's servant ought to be instructed to write out on a slate or on paper the name, address, and business of all those who call on a priest in his absence.—See CANON KEATING, *The Priest, His Character and Work.*

* * *

He (the Blessed Thomas More) delighted in drinking water; yet, not to seem singular or morose, he would hide his temperance from his guests by drinking, out of a pewter vessel, beer almost as light as water, or often pure water. . . . He speaks with great clearness and perfect articulation, without rapidity or hesitation. He likes a simple dress, using neither silk nor purple *nor gold chain*, except when it may not be omitted. . . . In society he is so polite, so sweet-mannered, that no one is of so melancholy a disposition as not to be cheered by him. . . . Since his boyhood he has so *delighted in merriment* that it seems to be part of his nature; yet he does not carry it to buffoonery, nor does he like *biting* pleasantries.

Money Matters Pages 105-110

"Keep down as much as you can the standard of your wants, for in this lies *a great secret* of manliness, true wealth, and happiness."—GLADSTONE, *Morley's Life.*

* * *

"The writer has met in his time a small number of clerical students possessed of great *shrewdness* in their own affairs; who examine their Diocese with care, make inquiries as to the men and means by which one may rapidly ascend and secure a fine berth the moment after ordination. These creatures are odious; their proper place is in trade."—DR. SMITH, *The Training of a Priest.*

* * *

Those who play cards for much money or late into the night are unworthy of a parish.—Synod of Maynooth (1900), n. 176.

* * *

Prava consuetudo de cursibus equorum pignoribus certandi.—Ibid. n. 175.

* * *

"Les jeux les plus innocents deviennent *blâmables*, s'ils occasionnent des pertes d'argent un peu considerables."—*Ex Statutis Parisiens.*

* * *

The Synod of Maynooth (1900) directs that moneys for parochial purposes are not to be collected in a parish without episcopal permission; that, when collected, they are to be deposited in a bank in the name of three trustees, one of whom should be the Bishop; that an account of receipts and outlay is to be furnished to the Bishop; and that the amount of money to be spent on any parochial project is to be determined by the Bishop after due consultation.—xxiv. 323–328.

* * *

Si, quocumque sub praetextu, pecunias quae ex coemeteriis derivantur, suas facere audeant viri ecclesiastici, poenis severissimis plectantur.—Conc. Balt., II. 393.

* * *

Prohibemus ne in posterum, sine expressa ordinarii licentia in scriptis, aliquis pastor plusquam centum nec vicarius plusquam triginta aureorum debito sese scienter oneret.—Sydney Synod (1885), n. 163; Maynooth Synod (1900), n. 208.

* * *

Loca ipsa scholarum, in quantum fieri potest, fidei plurium saltem trium, curatorum, committantur, si nondum commissa sunt, Episcopi scilicet vel Parochi, et aliorum ab Episcopo adprobandorum, in quorum nominibus tituli aut instrumenta accurate juxta legem civilem conficiantur.—Maynooth Synod (1900), xxxiv. 435.

* * *

Ea quae ecclesiasticis usibus apta donantur rectori missionario (sive ab individuis fidelibus sive a Sodalitatibus)

esse missioni donata decernimus, nisi contrarium clare et indubitanter pateat.—Third Synod of Baltimore, n. 276.

* * *

The Synod of Maynooth (1900) directs that no collection of money for secular purposes is to take place at the entrance to a church, in a church yard, at the entrance to a church yard, or in any other place where access to a church would be rendered difficult or disagreeable to persons unwilling to contribute.—xv. n. 115.

* * *

"Let all remember that money obtained in improper ways . . . draws after it the anger and vengeance of God. Hence *methods of finance* which may easily become *seminaria peccatorum et scandalorum* ought to be made use of sparingly and cautiously. Such methods *non possunt haberi Dominicis, Festis, aut esurialibus diebus neque sine licentia Episcopi neque cum usu liquorum inebriantium.*"—Conc. Balt., iii. 290, 291.

* * *

Quid de clero qui semper in eo esset ut pro festis et devotionibus pecuniam quaereret et pro pauperibus fere nihil faceret et fere nihil diceret?—Berardi, *Casus.*

* * *

The Second Synod of Baltimore (n. 364) observes with sorrow that in some places priests leave the altar during Mass, with the object of making a collection, and calls for the extirpation of a practice which is *abusus turpissimus, Ecclesiae sacrisque ejus ritibus injurius, quique catholicorum ruborem et indignationem, acatholicorum vero irrisionem et contemptum, provocat.*

The Sacraments Pages 112 and following

Dies et horae fidelibus convenientes pro Sacramentis in Ecclesia ministrandis statuantur. Item tabella, ab ordinario recognita et typis expressis, loco patenti Ecclesiae affigatur, in qua horae Missam celebrandi, confessiones audiendi, et

Baptisma conferendi, accurate ac distincte publicentur. Admittendi tamen erunt fideles quando alio tempore petant.—Synod of Maynooth (1900), xii. n. 46.

* * *

Omnes sacerdotes curam animarum habentes hortamur in Domino et enixe rogamus ut in Catholicis honestisque familiis juvenes inquirant qui ad clericale tyrocinium idonei et vocati videantur.—Third Australian Synod (1905), n. 76; Compare Third Synod of Baltimore, n. 181.

* * *

"In a mixed marriage, the house is not Catholic; the atmosphere is not Catholic; the symbols of faith are not visible; family prayers are not said; in all that concerns God, religion, the Church, the life to come, the souls of husband and wife are locked up from one another; they have no joint counsel, no community of feeling in the chief concern of life. 'Where one prayeth another curseth.' . . . Happy indeed is the Catholic wife if she is not thwarted, if her faith is unassailed, if, teased by sectarian importunities, she does not sacrifice her inward conscience to human respect and to a shallow exterior tranquillity."—ARCHBISHOP ULLATHORNE, *A Discourse on Mixed Marriages.*

* * *

In order to lessen the evils that result from mixed marriages the Bishops of the Province of Milwaukee, in the United States, have issued the following instruction to their priests:—"In future no dispensation for mixed marriages will be granted unless the non-Catholic party has taken instructions from the priest twice a week for six weeks on Catholic doctrine, on the Sacrament of Matrimony in particular, and on the duties connected with married life. *Casus absolutae necessitatis excipitur.*"

* * *

"Those who have the care of souls ought recommend the pious custom, observed by many, though not by all, Christian women, of coming to the church after childbirth to return thanks and to obtain a blessing; and they ought

also explain the origin and the reasons of an observance so long in vogue."—Second Council of Baltimore, n. 245.

* * *

"Anyone who understands human nature and accepts the testimony of experience will readily grant that confession is *a marvellous help* and comfort to the burdened and restless mind of man."—Second Synod of Baltimore, n. 274.

* * *

Dante's description of St. Peter's Gate of Purgatory, guarded by an angel with a flashing sword in his hand and two keys beneath his robe, beautifully symbolizes the various parts of Penance:—

"Thither we came; and the first mighty stair
Was *marble white*—so polished and so smooth
That I stood mirrored there as I appear.
The second, darker than the *darkest blue*,
Was formed of a rough stone, rugged and dry,
Cracked lengthwise and across through all its mass.
The third, whose bulk completes the topmost stair,
Seemed to my gaze of *porphyry*, that flamed
Like blood forth bursting from a smitten vein.
Thereon God's angel planting both his feet,
Sat firmly stationed on the threshold floor,
Which, as I thought, was solid diamond."

* * *

"There is no surer sign of a fervent priest than the love of the confessional It is the first duty that a lax priest avoids and evades." . . . "There is no manifestation of self" (as in preaching, etc.), "no natural excitement, no subtle allurements of a personal kind, in sitting for long hours listening to the sins and sorrows, and often inconsiderate talk of multitudes, for the most part unknown. . . . And it demands in a high degree an abnegation of self, a repression of personal infirmities of temper, and a *generous love of souls, especially of the poor.*"
—CARDINAL MANNING, *The Eternal Priesthood.*

Devotions Page 172

"Those (devotions and practices) which are peculiar to religious communities some set more value on than the lowly, humble, things which belong specially to no one, but are common to the whole Christian people—such as *the plebeian virtues* of Faith, Hope and Charity, the fear of God, humility and the like. . . . Of course those who do so will deny it. Who is so senseless as to confess to himself that he makes *more account of ceremonies than of precepts* ?"—BRIDGETT, *Life of Sir T. More.*

* * *

"There is a modern tendency on the part of many to strain after the last developments of doctrine or devotion, to the neglect of their root; to *prize the filigree* and *to ignore the solid substance* of which it is the efflorescence and the ornament. In an age in which Christianity and Theism itself are at stake, we especially need the masculine sense and generous *devotion to the great truths* which abound in the writings of the Fathers."—CARDINAL VAUGHAN, Introduction to the *Life of St. John Baptist de Rossi.*

* * *

"Sometimes it happens that days of thanksgiving or of public worship are set apart by the civil government of a country. On all such days, if any celebration takes place in the Catholic Church, it should be solely by reason of ecclesiastical authority, and without any mention of politics in the pulpit."—Second Council of Baltimore, n. 399.

* * *

Owing to the worldly spirit of modern times the Church has suppressed nearly all the holydays formerly observed. But she will never surrender Sunday. She will ever strive to keep that day a day of liberty, of rest, of joy, of holiness, for her children.[1] Hence on that day she prescribes the Mass, mystically renews the death of the Saviour, and

[1] See Gilfillan. *The Sabbath Viewed in the Light of Reason, Revelation, and History.*

gathers her children like young olive plants—*sicut novellæ olivarum*—around the Holy Table to participate in the Bread of Life. "The Sabbath," says Leo XIII, "with its religious observances, disposes a man to forget for a while the business of every-day life and to turn his thoughts to things heavenly and to the worship of the Eternal Godhead. Therefore the rest must not be understood as a mere giving way to idleness, much less as an occasion for spending money and for vicious indulgences, as many would have it to be" (*Rerum Novarum*). Catholics may well be expected to give one day out of seven generously to God, to sanctify it by means of prayer, reading, and genial intercourse with friends and relatives, and to abstain from all amusements and occupations out of harmony with its sacred character, or likely to lead to transgressions of divine or of human legislation. "The pastors," says the Third Synod of Baltimore (n. 113), "who by pleadings, warnings, threats, and even sometimes by penal sanctions, tactfully labour to counteract saloon and public-house traffic on Sundays, will contribute their share to the removal of the *one blemish* which, amongst us, besmirches the glory of the Lord's Day."

* * *

"Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament is one of the most beautiful, natural and soothing actions of the Church. . . . It is our Lord's solemn Benediction of His people, as when He lifted up His hands over the children, or when He blessed His chosen ones when He ascended from Mount Olivet. As sons might come before a parent before going to bed at night, so, once or twice a week, the great Catholic family comes before the Eternal Father, after the bustle or toil of the day, and He smiles upon them and sheds upon them the light of His countenance. It is a full accomplishment of what the priest invoked upon the Israelites: The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord show His face to thee, and have mercy on thee; the Lord turn His countenance to thee and give thee peace. Can there be a more touching rite, even in the judgment of those who do not believe in it? How many a man, not a Catholic, is moved

on seeing it to say, 'Oh, that I did but believe it!' when he sees the priest take up the Fount of Mercy and the people bend low in adoration."—NEWMAN, *Present Position of Catholics.*

Self-questionings on the foregoing

Am I careful not to *unduly multiply* secondary and supplemental devotions? Do I induce the faithful to select those practices of piety which are "most practical, most elevating, and most in keeping with the times"? Have I the habit of anticipating the greater festivals and of inducing the parish to prepare for them? Do I, by frequent and accurate instructions, strive to elevate the mind and *ennoble the moral sentiment* of the people? Do I keep alive the best attributes and the holiest memories of the Irish race—its spiritual instincts, its fidelity to truth, its love of freedom, its hatred of persecution, its long line of saints and scholars? Instead of searching out for what is novel or emotional do I stimulate and cultivate simple, old-fashioned devotions and practices, which are trained like tendrils around the hearts of the faithful, such as the *Angelus*, the *Rosary*, the *Stations of the Cross*, grace before and after meals, and the reading of select portions of Sacred Scripture? Are elaborate shrines allowed to obscure the little lamp in the Sanctuary and to allure worshippers from the living Jesus to lifeless representations?[1] Are the people often warned that prayer must be in spirit and in truth, that it must not degenerate into the *multiloquium* of the heathen, that it means more than petitions, and that even its petitions ought to be primarily and in the main for the spiritual favours, enumerated in the Lord's Prayer, and only secondarily and conditionally, if at all, for temporal gifts? Are prayer books allowed to be in circulation which, by their want of style, their want of sense, and their ill-made

[1] *Ante tabernaculum plures lampades profecto sint quam forte reperiantur ante reliquias vel imagines Sanctorum aut B.V.*—S.R.C., 2 Julii, 1661; Ballerini-Palmieri, vol. iv. tract x. n. 116.

litanies and formulas, excite the disgust and indignation of the intelligent? Is attention ever directed to useful books of devotion, compiled by trustworthy authors? Are the plain issues, the broad fundamental lines of religious duty, kept steadily before the people? Is the popular tendency towards material objects of piety kept within reasonable bounds? Are the sacramentals misunderstood or misapplied? Are the rationalistic made to realize their utility, and the superstitiously inclined (*rudior plebecula*) " again and again very *sharply rebuked* for using those sacred things as the heathens use charms and amulets "? Are the people told that medals, scapulars, holy water, etc., are not labour-saving apparatus, do not lessen our responsibilities, but rather, if rightly used, stimulate us to greater earnestness and harder work? Are the inner springs of the spiritual life ever clogged by mere formalism, by perfunctory exterior observances? Do church services interfere with family duties and devotions? Are week-day functions allowed to lessen the solemn sanctification of those days of rest which are set apart by Christians for the public recognition of God, and for the betterment of the entire community? Is the far-reaching importance of Sunday observance insisted on? Is the co-operation of masters and employers of labour tactfully solicited in this matter? Are the services of the Liturgy allowed to become a medium of vainglorious advertisement, or an occasion for mere vocal displays? Do Rectors, contrary to the prohibition of the Fourth Provincial Synod of Westminster, publish themselves or allow others to publish accounts of Church music and criticisms of the singers? Are prayers ever publicly recited in the vernacular except such as are authorized by the Ordinary? (Compare Second Synod of Baltimore, nn. 502, 350, 398.)

Societies Pages 196-211

" Parents and teachers ought, when occasion offers, warn their children and their pupils against *evil societies* and against the many seductive influences made use of to

entrap recruits. They ought even suggest to them the advisability of joining no society, without parental or priestly counsel."—LEO XIII, *Humanum Genus.*

* * *

"Unless divine grace and good sense are always at hand to restrain the growth of the autocratic spirit in a young priest, it will in time become most offensive."—DR. SMITH, *The Training of a Priest.*

Notanda a Praedicantibus Page 227

"I reckon," remarked Cousin Jonathan, "that our predicant kindles a goodly fire on the Sabbath, and on all the other days of the week does his best to put it out."

* * *

In praxi caute omnino loquendum est de igne inferni et sedulo vitandae sunt horribiles illae descriptiones, saepe saepius a praedicatoribus usurpatae, quae, dum quosdam pios fideles terrent, causa sunt cur alii de inferni existentia dubitare incipiant vel Deum ut crudelem tyrannum considerent.—TANQUEREY, *De Deo Remuneratore.*

* * *

Plerumque qui peccat mortaliter non expresse intendit rebellionem contra Deum; hinc sacri oratores hac in re a nimiis amplificationibus abstineant.—TANQUEREY, *De Peccatis.*

* * *

Study plainness of language, shortness of sentences, distinctness of articulation;

Seek a thorough familiarity with your subject, and rely on this to prompt the proper words;

Watch (and study) your audience if you wish to sway them.—GLADSTONE to a Correspondent.

* * *

The following defects in manner and voice are positively *offensive* in a preacher:—

Swinging the body;
Leaning forward or backward;
Hammering the pulpit;

Blowing the nose like a fog-horn ;
Coughing without the handkerchief ;
Speaking through teeth or nose, etc.

—STANG, *Pastoral Theology.*

* * *

" I can assure you that it sometimes takes me *a week* to think over what it does not take me *a minute* to say." —RUSKIN, *Eagle's Nest*, p. 31.

Education and Schools Page 240

" Education means teaching people to behave as they do not behave. . . . It is training them into the perfect exercise and kingly continence of their bodies and souls. It is a painful and difficult work, to be done by kindness, by watching, by warning, by precept, by praise, but, *above all, by example.*"—RUSKIN.

* * *

" In this country too few homes are provided with pictures and statues and other objects of devotion calculated to impress and teach the child."—DR. SMITH, *The Training of a Priest.*

* * *

" The children whose youth is influenced by an *intelligent and prudent priest* rarely fall into modern grossness." —DR. SMITH, *The Training of a Priest.*

* * *

" No priest has greater joy than he who loves his schools and trains with his own eye the boys who surround his altar."—MANNING, *The Eternal Priesthood.*

* * *

A pastor should (*per se vel per suos vicarios*) at least once a week visit every primary school in his parish where it is lawful for children to go.—Maynooth Synod (1900), xxiv. 305.

* * *

Resolutions of Gerald Griffin:—

(*a*) To be gentle with children;

(*b*) To humble his mind so as to suit his ideas and language to the capacity or dullness of their intellects;

(*c*) To regard them as the dearest portion of the Church, on account of their innocence;

(*d*) To bear with their defects and treat them always with paternal affection;

(*e*) To watch over his own passions, anger, pride and self-love, so that he may become a model to the children of patience, meekness, and generosity.

* * *

"It is our wish that ecclesiastical students be made to realize that *one of the principal duties of a priest*, especially in modern times, is the Christian training of youth, and that such is *impossible* without parochial schools or other really Catholic ones. Therefore special attention must be given to this subject in classes of psychology, pedagogy, and pastoral theology. Moreover, students should be taught how to give children clear and solid instructions in Catechism and Sacred History."—Third Council of Baltimore, n. 201.

* * *

"Some young men are by nature cool, egotistical, and indifferent; some are loving and affectionate . . . . others, again, take up those that are younger and pet and spoil them. . . . Souls are God's most precious possessions and the cherished flowers of God's holy Spirit. If you approach a soul with mere human liking, urged by your soft nature, you do as one who handles a delicate flower with hot, moist, and clumsy hands; it is never the same again. Keep off. Study your longing for love. . . . Study, like a man who watches a stream in time of rain, study the impulses of your heart. There is always a danger of the water getting over the banks."—HEDLEY, *Lex Levitarum*.

* * *

"The faithful, more especially those who possess wealth

and influence, should be admonished in pastoral letters, addresses, and private conversations . . . that it would be *a grave neglect of duty* not to give to Catholic schools all the care and pecuniary assistance in their power."—Instruction of S. C. de Prof. Fide. (1875) to American Bishops; see Appendix, Third Council of Baltimore.

Collection at Mission Page 256

"No collection should take place on the occasion of a mission. Only necessary expenses should be asked from the people, and these in the manner prescribed by the Bishop of the Diocese. A full account of receipts and outlay should be forwarded to the Bishop on the termination of the mission."—Synod of Maynooth (1900), n. 27.

* * *

The Synod of Sydney (1905), n. 287, directs that a mission should be safeguarded from the faintest suspicion of money-making—*vel minima suspicio quaestus procul arceatur.*

The Propagation of the Faith Page 257

Is the Society of the Propagation of the Faith established in your parish? Are its *Annals* distributed regularly amongst the people? Do you give your yearly contribution—only two shillings and twopence, half a dollar? Do you say the appointed prayer? Do you organize zealous co-operators in the good cause? Do you awaken in the hearts of the people a desire to communicate to non-Catholics the blessings and privileges of Catholicity? Do you repeat with sincerity those words of the daily office: *Confiteantur Tibi omnes populi*?

* * *

"I want Catholics who know their religion, who enter into it, who know what they hold and what they do not, who know their creed so well that they can give an account

of it, who know so much of history that they can defend it. . . . Protestantism is fierce, because it does not know you."—NEWMAN, *Present Position of Catholics.*

* * *

"We have been hoarding up our treasures without a desire of sharing them. We have been building pools of Solomon, but, unlike the all-wise king, we have forgotten the aqueducts. The Lord said, 'Go forth and teach.' We are content to say, 'Come and learn.' . . . *The charity of the Church extends to every soul in the land.* By spreading truth we may break down the confidence of ignorance; we shall at all events neutralize some of the effects of those specious works which supply young people with grounds for unbelief and irreligion."—SHEEHAN, *Essays and Lectures.*

* * *

"Do not avoid non-Catholic clergymen or local persons of weight out of distrust of their principles. You will gain much more by being friendly than by holding aloof."—CANON KEATING.

* * *

"Those who do not know how difficult it is to find the truth may be severe with you; I, who know it from experience, can have nothing but charity and pity for you."—ST. AUSTEN.

* * *

Twenty years after his conversion Newman wrote in the *Apologia*: "From the time that I became a Catholic . . . I have had no anxiety of heart whatever. . . . I have been in perfect peace and contentment; I have never had one doubt."

* * *

"It has been said that converts resemble Jacob, who intended to wed Rachel and afterwards discovered that his wife was Leah. But the Church is no Leah, rather a fairer Rachel than we dared to dream of, her blessings greater than we had hoped."—KEGAN PAUL, *Memories.*

* * *

Putting aside external losses, Father Benson says that "to submit to the Church seems in prospect (to the intending convert) to be going out from the familiar and the beloved and the understood into a huge, heartless wilderness, where one will be eyed and doubted and snubbed. Certainly that is a complete illusion; yet it is, I think, the last emotional snare spread by Satan; and I think he is occasionally aided in spreading it by the carelessness of Catholic controversialists."—See *Tablet*, May 11, 1907.

Disputes Page 259

"Observe, I say only—to *defend*, never to *attack*, or say or do what might be interpreted as attacking anyone. I would have you, therefore, simply ready to reply to objections, or enter into explanations, when likely to be understood; which, I must add, thanks to the almost utter neglect of philosophic education throughout the English-speaking world, you will by no means find always likely—be your company what it may. Still, you may be always willing, at least briefly, to answer *questions* in reference to the general character of your system. I would not even say be wholly unwilling to enter into a quiet discussion in regard to the merits of it with persons whom you know to be fairly informed on matters of philosophy; or with those who, without much positive information on the subject, you see are persons who have really reflected on it, whose minds have run in that order of thinking. First, however, make sure that love of truth is the main motive of the discussion; that you are speaking to a person, or at least before persons, really anxious to be *convinced* one way or the other. But when it is, or not originally having been, has become simply a question of one of you *convicting*, confounding, beating the other—silence! Noble, manly silence becomes wisdom then. Let them say what they like of you, and your view, and the system from which it is derived; let them laugh, or sneer, or rail away; never dispute. That word-contest, one striving to beat the other in argument, to catch him in his words, is

but a silly business at best ; unmanly, school-boyish in the extreme ; besides proceeding on the utterly false assumption of your using a perfectly constructed language. Then it is utterly unphilosophical. It was, you know, quite the style of the old Greek sophists, and their counterparts among the Jews. So is a tendency to it the acknowledged mark of a sophistic turn of mind—a purely formal spirit, as distinguished from a philosophic character, a *real*-truth loving soul. But the worst of this disputing—this striving to convict one another, the radical vice of it, is, that its natural outcome is sin—positive breach of justice, charity, and common Christian humility. Through self-conceit, unfairness, and rash judgment, is its natural way, and its end is bitterness of feeling on both sides—too often, alas ! lasting rupture of a long-standing friendship, or a life-long interchange of kindly relations. Shun disputes, then. And I had almost said shun those who show a liking for them. But that would be often very inconvenient, may even well be uncharitable and unfair. It will do to say, avoid intellectual communication with such, especially in the way of discussing subjects before others. Above all hate anything approaching to a public discussion. With regard to that, indeed, I would say, as a general rule, unless positive and imperative duty demands it, never be the first to give anyone a public contradiction. Having once done so, you can hardly fail to find or feel yourself obliged to dispute, like enough to go on disputing *ad infinitum*. Miserable obligation ! Dread it. Hate it."—DR. O'MAHONY, *Address to Philosophy Students*.

The Councils of Baltimore

The Second and Third Plenary Councils of Baltimore have been repeatedly quoted in the preceding pages, sometimes at considerable length. Therefore we append the following observation :—

" The decrees of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore

embody the legislation of the preceding National and Provincial Synods of the United States. . . . They do not contain a single obsolete law or canon, but are all *eminently adapted to the times and country in which we live.* They should not only be *carefully studied in the Seminary,* but should be afterwards *reviewed at least once a year.* They are held in high esteem by the leading Churchmen of Europe, and have been recommended by the Holy See as *a model of legislation* to the hierarchy of other countries."—CARDINAL GIBBONS, *The Ambassador of Christ.*

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